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PAPERS RELATING TO THE  
FOREIGN RELATIONS OF  
THE UNITED STATES  
JAPAN: 1931-1941

(In Two Volumes)  
VOLUME I

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## PREFACE

The documents published in these volumes were selected with a view to presenting a comprehensive record of the diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan in regard to matters related to the causes of conflict between the two countries from the beginning of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria on September 18, 1931, to the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the declaration of war by the United States on December 8, 1941.

The amount of background material here printed has been limited by the necessity of keeping the publication within a reasonable compass. It was obviously impossible to include an absolutely complete selection of even the more important of the pertinent reports coming to the Department from American diplomatic representatives and other observers during the ten years covered. Therefore only reports of special significance have been selected.

While the American Government consulted with other interested powers and at times took parallel action in dealing with crises arising in the Far East during this period, it was not its practice to take joint action. It has therefore been thought advisable to limit the selection to those documents relating <sup>directly</sup> to American-Japanese relations without entering into the ramifications of discussions with third powers.

The correspondence with the Japanese Government with respect to losses by American nationals due to bombings and other acts of the Japanese armed forces in China is so voluminous that documents in record of representations in many individual cases have been omitted. This printed record therefore includes only the record of representations of a general character and the number of notes on particular incidents which were thought to be typical.

It is contemplated that additional documents relative to some of the developments treated in the present publication and to other phases of the policy of the United States toward the Far East during the years 1931-1941 will be published in the regular annual volumes of FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.

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DENUNCIATION BY JAPAN OF THE WASHINGTON NAVAL TREATY OF 1922 <sup>1</sup>

(Article 23 of the London Naval Treaty of 1930 (Department of State Treaty Series No. 830) provided that the signatory powers should meet in conference in 1935 "to frame a new treaty to replace and carry out the purposes of the existing treaty.")

In May 1934, the British Cabinet Council considered the question of preparing for the 1935 Conference and at the conclusion of its deliberations asked the American and the Japanese Governments to send representatives to London to carry on preliminary and exploratory conversations which should be bilateral rather than trilateral. The invited Governments accepted, the United States indicating that it would be glad to discuss both procedural and technical naval questions, and Japan declaring the readiness of that Government to deal only with questions of procedure as its preparations on the substance of the naval problem were not yet completed. The Japanese Government sent no delegation to London during the summer. The Anglo-American conversations lasted from June 18 to July 19, 1934.

The second stage of the conversations began shortly after the long-delayed arrival of the Japanese delegation on October 16 and continued until December 19, 1934. In accordance with the original British invitation in June, the procedure followed was that of separate Anglo-American, Anglo-Japanese, and American-Japanese discussions; except on the last day (December 19) no trilateral meetings took place. For text of letter of guidance which President Roosevelt addressed to Mr. Norman H. Davis, October 5, 1934, upon his departure for London to continue the conversations, see telegram no. 373, November 30, 1935, to the Ambassador in Great Britain, page 281.)

500 A15A5/7

THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

no. 520

TOKYO, September 15, 1933  
(Received September 30.)

Sir: Japanese naval leaders find themselves at present in a serious quandary. They have, since the ratification of the London Treaty <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For text of the treaty signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, see FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup>London Naval Treaty, signed at London, April 22, 1930, Department of State Treaty Series No. 830.

and especially in the past year or more, insisted that Japan must demand parity, or at least a great increase in relative tonnage, at the next Naval Conference in 1935. They have built up a feeling among the people of resentment and contempt for anything connected with the London Treaty. Premier Hamaguchi and Premier Inukai were assassinated, and other statesmen live in fear of their lives, in consequence of the bitter feeling stirred up against protagonists of the London Treaty. Admirals Takarabe, Yamanashi and Taniguchi have been retired in consequence it is generally believed, of their support of this Treaty. According to the press, Admiral Taniguchi's recent retirement put an end to the high naval influence standing for the maintenance of the present treaty status. His retirement took place during the conduct of the "May 15th trials", which have taken on the character of the Soviet propaganda trials and have stirred up great patriotic ardor against the London Treaty.

The result of these efforts by military leaders has been the creation of an intense antipathy for the arms limitation treaties and a universal demand for revision of the present naval ratios in favor of Japan. This feeling was useful to the Navy leaders until lately, when American naval construction has definitely commenced. The Navy now has the unenviable task of deciding whether to abrogate the treaties next year and start a hopeless competition with far wealthier nations for naval supremacy, or else to accept a continuance of the present ratios and to face an outraged public. Until recently, as the Japanese Navy approached the American Navy in effective tonnage, many leaders had high hopes of achieving parity or near parity with America. A short time ago Vice Admiral Takahashi, Vice Chief of the Naval General Staff, frankly said to the Assistant Naval Attache of this Embassy: "We are going to the Conference in 1935 with a demand for parity. If our demand is rejected, we shall return home."

This hope is now vanishing, as America begins to build toward the Treaty limits. By 1936 they realize that the situation will be comparable to that in 1927.

It is obvious from the flood of comment\* which has followed announcement of the American building plans that the Japanese navy leaders are bitterly disappointed. They expected to have everything their own way at the conference in 1935 with their own navy built to the limit and the "merican navy hardly 75% effective. Their calculations have been completely upset by this new and unexpected development in the United States.

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\* Embassy's despatch no. 480 of July 26, 1933. (Footnote in the original; despatch under reference not printed.)

At present the Army and Navy are concentrating their efforts on obtaining funds for completion of their armament programs. The Navy program was discussed in brief in the Embassy's previous despatch on reaction to the American building program. The American program is being used as justification for increased demands, and the impression is given out that the second naval replenishment program has been launched only because of the need of keeping pace with America. The fact is, of course, that the second replenishment program was announced in almost the present form as early as January of this year, several months before the American program was conceived. Moreover, the Japanese press invariably remarks that the the American program will bring American naval strength up to Treaty limits, whereas actually it is understood to fall short of the objective by about 175,000 tons. But anything is used these days as an excuse for increased armaments for the Japanese Army and Navy.

There is hereto appended a translation appearing in the Japan Times of an interesting statement by the Minister of War General Araki, in regard to national defence and the necessity of preparation for the approaching crisis in 1935 and 1936<sup>3</sup>. There is also appended hereto an account of an interview given by the Navy Minister to the Tokyo correspondent of the United Press, which may be of interest in connection with Naval affairs.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph C. Grew

(ENCLOSURE)

Interview Given by the Japanese Minister of Marine (Osumi) to the Correspondent of the United Press in Tokyo

(Undated)

1. Q. Is Japan satisfied with the existing naval agreements? Will she request a larger ratio when the agreements come on for revision in 1936?

A. In the treatment of armament limitation problem the security and the limitation of fighting power are invariably bound together. From this fact it would be apparent that the position of naval armament is always closely dependent on international surroundings. If that is the case, there is no reason why a nation should remain forever content with a treaty which it had once signed. Only out of regard for the welfare of humanity, we signed the London Naval Treaty, but we did not do it unconditionally. As regards the Washington Agreement, it was signed twelve years ago and in our opinion is no longer adequate to guarantee the security of this empire as the

<sup>3</sup>

Japan Times, September 14, 1933; not reprinted

international situation has thoroughly altered in that period of time. Furthermore from the standpoint of true armament limitation it is doubtful if the present ruling is really most rational and economical. At any rate we are not satisfied with the present arrangement, and we will demand the change of ratios at the next conference.

2. Q. Have the existing naval agreements served a useful purpose from the viewpoint of Japan? Does the Japanese Navy favor making new agreements cover additional categories of ships including submarines?

A. From the standpoints of all nations participatory to it, I will not deny that the existing treaties have served some useful purpose. For example:

(a) They have to some extent effectually checked the competition in armament building, as far as the capital ships were concerned.

(b) They have ushered in a building holiday as regards the capital ships and to that extent lightened the burden on the tax-payers.

(c) Through the limitation of the types and guns they have precluded the chance of new ships becoming suddenly incapacitated as the result of a new invention in fighting machineries, and thus prolonged the life of fighting vessels consequently enabling the participants to economize expenditures.

I think these are the benefits common to all nations.

3. Q. Does the Minister apprehend a so-called "naval construction race" between Japan and the United States?

A. As far as the present situation is concerned, Japan and the United States are building only within treaty limits. Hence in my idea the term "naval race" is a sheer misnomer to describe the building position between these two countries.

4. Q. Why do Japanese naval publicists refer to the Mandate Islands in the South Seas as Japan's naval lifeline? Of what value are these islands from a viewpoint of defence?

A. The South Sea Islands are separated from the southernmost islands of Japan by a narrow strip of water. Parts of Japan are situated within the cruising radius of a heavy bombing plane from the South Sea Islands, which possess therefore a great strategical value for the defence of the empire. If they should fall in the hands of a hostile power in war time, it will constitute a direct menace to the safety of our defence. This is why we call it the life-line of our sea defence. Some preach the idea that Japan is going to utilize these islands for an attack on the Pacific coast of the United States and the Hawaiian Islands. But just a look at the map will convince the public of the fallacy of such a doctrine. Can these islands be used as a base of attack on Hawaii which are lying as much as 2,000 miles away beyond the ocean, and this with a navy of lesser strength?



The sheer impossibility of such idea will be apparent to anybody who knows something about naval warfare.

5. Q. Does the Minister believe the purchase of a 45 percent interest in the China Aviation Corporation by American interests is a matter of interest to the Japanese Navy? Does Japan consider American participation in Chinese aviation development as connected with China's defence plans?

A. I am in no position to answer the question 5 except that we have as yet no reliable information in this respect, and that between the civil and the military aviation there is no hard and fast line of distinction, and this circumstance gave rise to embarrassing complication at Geneva whenever the problem was brought up for discussion.

6. Q. What does the Minister consider to be the mission or objectives of the United States and Japanese navies in contrast? Should there be, or is there, any clash in these objectives?

A. Secretary of the Navy, Swanson recently stated that the United States means to hold a navy strong enough to defend the country and its oversea dominions, and to this end will build, maintain and operate the first-in-the-world navy following the provision of existing treaties. If such is the case it can by no means clash with the mission of the Japanese navy which consists in the maintenance of the peace in the Far East and the defence of the empire's position in the Far East. To the Japanese Navy the idea of crossing the Pacific Ocean in order to attack our neighbors is quite alien. Its mission is strictly defensive and legitimate.

7. Q. Does the Minister see any possibility of Japanese-American War?

A. I am positive in the belief that unless Japan's national existence is menaced to the extent that the use of force is the only way to defend it, the world will never find Japan involved in a war with other countries.

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500.A4B/559:Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State  
(Paraphrase)

Tokyo, September 18, 1934  
noon.

(Received September 18  
2:47 a.m.)

204. I was informed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs yesterday that Japan had definitely decided to give notice before December 31, 1934, to terminate the Washington Naval Treaty. Although many elements in the Navy wished to abrogate immediately, the Minister said that he had insisted on delaying until after the London conversations in October, as he intended to discuss the subject with the other



signatories before abrogation so as not to give offense and also for the purpose of avoiding the unfavorable atmosphere before the next naval conference which, if abrogation should take place without a preliminary mutual understanding, might arise. The Minister stated that the abrogation discussions would be conducted separately with the various signatories and that the matter would be taken up with the American delegation at the preliminary conversations in London by Matsudaira, the Japanese Ambassador in Great Britain.

Grew

500.A15A5/211 : Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

London, October 24, 1934-7 p.m.

(Received October 24-5:17 p.m.)

6. In the meeting with the Japanese delegation this morning Matsudaira read a brief general statement of the Japanese position following which Admiral Yamamoto read a more detailed statement. The substance of their position is contained in the following synopsis handed us at the end of the meeting.

"To possess the measure of armaments necessary for national safety is a right to which all nations are equally entitled. In considering the question of disarmament, therefore, due regard must be given to that right in order that the sense of national security of the various powers might not be impaired; and any agreement for the limitation and reduction of armaments must be based on the fundamental principle of "nonaggression and nonmenace."

To that end we believe that the most appropriate method in the field of naval armament is for us, the leading naval powers, to fix a common upper limit which may in no case be exceeded, but within which limit each power would be left free to equip itself in the manner and to the extent which it deems necessary for its defensive needs. It is desirable that this common upper limit should be fixed in the agreement as low as possible and that offensive arms should be reduced to the minimum or abolished altogether in favor of essentially defensive arms so as to facilitate defense and to render attack difficult."

(Paraphrase.) They had made the same declarations to the British yesterday, Matsudaira said.

We limited ourselves to putting questions for the purpose of clarifying the Japanese position particularly with regard to what they meant by "offensive arms" and by a "common upper limit." It was explained by Admiral Yamamoto that the "upper limit" should be the same for each power and should be fixed as low as possible of course; that while Japan would not build up to this maximum necessarily, the treaty

would leave each country, during the treaty period, at liberty to build to any point within that limit which it considered necessary for its security. It was emphasized by Matsudaira that any treaty agreement not to build beyond a certain level within the maximum would constitute, in essence, a disguised continuance of the ratio system and would be interpreted as a perpetuation of naval inferiority by the Japanese people.

Concerning offensive weapons Admiral Yamamoto agreed that, under certain circumstances, all naval weapons partook of an offensive character, but that it was a question of determining which vessels, in comparison with others, were more peculiarly useful for offense; that the Japanese Navy regarded aircraft carriers, capital ships, and 8-inch-gun cruisers as peculiarly offensive naval weapons in the order given. Yamamoto added that, owing to their relative unseaworthiness and short range, submarines were regarded by the Japanese Navy as useful primarily for defense, and that the offensive character of submarines vis-a-vis merchant vessels would be ended if the existing agreement in the London Treaty against the use of submarines for attacking merchant vessels were made effective and universal.

At the request of Matsudaira, I summarized briefly our position as we had stated it to the British last summer in favor of continuing to adhere to the bases and principles on which our Navy had been reduced and limited, combined with a relative reduction in total treaty tonnages. Matsudaira pointed out that his delegation was under definite instructions to propose a new basis for continuing naval limitation, and that a continuance of the present system could <sup>not</sup> be accepted by them.

I then asked the Japanese to indicate exactly what if anything had occurred during the past 13 years to alter the relative equality in security admittedly established by the ratios set in 1922 for each power. Yamamoto explained that the Washington Treaty had established equality of defense in the waters close to Japan but not in the middle of the Pacific. Developments, since that time, in naval construction and technique, particularly in aviation, had overturned the equilibrium and had cast the balance greatly in favor of a potential attacking fleet, so that today the old figures could not possibly satisfy the feeling of security of the Japanese people. The inferior ratio had, in addition the defect of causing "a certain country"<sup>5</sup> to regard Japan with a certain amount of contempt which had produced, in turn, serious complications in the Orient and led to the Japanese people's insistent demand for a revision of the system in effect at present. Ambassador Matsudaira referred also to the troubled political situation in the Far East as well as throughout the rest of the world, stating that Euro-

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<sup>5</sup> China

pean events had a disturbing psychological effect on Japan and increased the Japanese public's unwillingness that the present treaty principles should continue.

I stated to Matsudaira that they had employed general phrases about equality of rights, etc, which were capable of meaning quite different things to different nations, and that, before determining whether or not the Japanese proposals could be taken into consideration as furnishing a basis for discussion in the future, it would be necessary to determine exactly what they meant; that, in the event there should be no objection to discussing a different basis for continuing naval limitations and reductions, it would appear that the Japanese suggestions might involve such fundamental alterations in principle, policy, and theory as to necessitate a reopening and re-examination of all the questions which had gone into the formulation of the present naval treaties. I expressed doubt of the practicability and advisability of this, particularly at this time. It had been our hope that it would not be necessary to bring up political questions, in the preliminary conversations at least, which might be involved by some of their proposals. Matsudaira recognized that this was one difficulty which we faced, but indicated that the Japanese proposals did not envisage a change in the status of any of the present political agreements or of the nonfortification provisions in the Pacific area. It was then agreed that it would not be advisable to continue further today our discussions, inasmuch as each of us would desire time carefully to consider what had been said, including the further elucidation of the Japanese position which Matsudaira had announced he wanted to make.

The understanding was the conversation would be treated as confidential and that nothing would be said to the press except that a general exchange of views had taken place and that no documents had been exchanged between us. (End paraphrase.)

Davis

500.11545/211:Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Chairman of the American Delegation (Davis)

(Paraphrase)

Washington, October 25, 1934  
6 p.m.

6. With reference to your telegram no. 6 of October 24, 7 p.m. the Japanese statement and the recent public utterances of responsible exponents of Japanese unofficial and official views indicate an uncompromising and rigid Japanese attitude. That the Japanese are preparing the ground for a probable walkout is suggested by the rigidity and scope of the position which they take. An evident un-



willingness on their part to discuss anything except what suits their own national aspirations, regardless of world conditions, implies a throwing off of all restrictions and an abandoning of all effort looking toward real cooperation in the realm of international relations and peace machinery. No justification is offered by them except arguments of prestige and manifest destiny for their claim of paramount responsibilities and rights in the Far Eastern peace. No sufficient reason exists why all the nations of the world cannot proceed on the basis of security and peace laid down in the Washington treaties, to the principles and provisions of which treaties this Government still adheres. The plea on the part of the Japanese of need of self-defense is similar to the one which they made at the time of beginning their military occupation of Manchuria and their attack, in 1932, at Shanghai upon the Chinese. No reason exists why the other countries of the world should accept the Japanese view of Japan's requirements and rights or allow themselves to be represented as obstructing the Japanese people's legitimate aspirations. The publicity which the Japanese are according to their line of exposition suggests that, on the expectancy of walking out, they desire to create an impression with the public, to be developed further at the moment when they wish, that they are driven to that conclusive action by indifference to Japanese necessities in the field of self-defense on the part of other countries.

It will be necessary for us to combat whatever efforts they may make to shift the responsibility for a break, if and when it occurs, from themselves to the United States and/or Great Britain.

We believe that we should be guided, in contacts with the British conferees and with the press, by the above line of reasoning. However, it should not be made the basis of any official statement but might, in the course of discussions or conferences where comment is required, be borne in mind.

From the American point of view, the publicity here at present is satisfactory.

Philips

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500.A1515/211 : Telegram

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW)  
(Paraphrase)

Washington, October 31, 1934-9 p.m.

186. The developments in London since October 25 are as follows:  
On October 25 Davis and the Prime Minister <sup>5a</sup> exchanged views regarding the Japanese proposals. The idea of a common maximum

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<sup>5a</sup>  
J. Ramsay MacDonald.

limit will not be accepted by the British. It was their hope that when the Japanese perceived that the British and the Americans would not agree to fundamental changes, the Japanese would become more reasonable and would be content with a statement in the preamble to the treaty voicing equality of sovereign rights, the treaty itself fixing respective relative limits approximately according to the present ratios. Before coming to grips, the British wished to have further explanation from the Japanese. In order not to unsettle unity of British-American views regarding the Japanese position, Davis avoided raising technical questions.

The London press on October 26, under information from the Foreign Office, deprecated the views relative to the Anglo-Japanese alliance which were expressed in Tokyo by spokesman for the federation of British industries mission in the Far East; the press emphasized the close approximation of British-American naval policies.

At the American-Japanese meeting on the morning of October 29, Matsudaira stated that his Government would denounce the Washington Naval Treaty before the end of the year. Matsudaira also said that the same common upper limit proposed by Japan would apply to France and Italy. In regard to a possible meeting of the technical experts of the two delegations, Davis told the Japanese that we were willing to listen to their technical views only if it were understood that neither side would make any commitments in principle. Admiral Yamamoto saw little value in technical meeting unless we were prepared to state the technical details of our program. Davis replied that we had no technical details, as the American program was a percentage reduction within the existing system, although as to carrying it into effect in individual categories we were open-minded. The two delegations agreed that the matter be taken up at a subsequent meeting.

In the afternoon on October 29 the British and the American delegations met and the Prime Minister raised question of increased cruiser tonnage. Davis stated that technical discussions would lack reality in view of the fundamental changes proposed by the Japanese and their intention to denounce the Washington Naval Treaty. The Prime Minister said that the Japanese position was more serious for Britain than for the United States and that the British were determined to meet the situation with a fleet that would be adequate for defense in the Pacific as well as at home; they would do this either by building a fleet of sufficient size or by seeking a political agreement that would cover the Pacific for the requisite security there.

MacDonald reiterated that the British did not agree to the Japanese idea of a common upper limit, which would apply also to France,



Italy and probably to Germany and to Russia as well. The Prime Minister felt that for the present a patient attitude toward Japan should be continued, but that if a tripartite agreement became impossible he did not question British parity with America based on the British conceptions of their own risks. Davis stated that we had no desire to impose on the British a treaty incompatible with their national safety, but that we must consider joint adoption of a course by which a naval race with Japan would not be invited. The suggestion was made by the British that when the Americans next met with the Japanese they should urge the latter to contemplate the situation which would result from no treaty. The British had set before the Japanese a face-saving device, but they had adopted an unreceptive attitude toward it. When the Japanese situation should have definitely cleared up, the British agreed on the desirability of tripartite meetings; and they also agreed that for the time being British-American technical discussions would be inadvisable. It is Davis's belief that the British view policy of the Japanese with deep concern, and that in their own minds the British have reached no solution.

Phillips

500.41545/254a:Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION  
(DAVIS)  
(EXTRACT-PARAPHRASE)

Washington, November 13, 1934-  
3 p.m.

17. We are convinced by the conversations which have taken place over the past three weeks<sup>6</sup> that practically no chance exists of bridging the definite disagreement between the Japanese delegation on the one hand and the British and ourselves on the other with regard to the fundamentals of future naval limitation. Every opportunity has been afforded the Japanese to explain and to justify Japan's demands; we have not forced the pace and we have not refused them a chance to "save face". We should continue to emphasize our thesis that maintaining the treaties as a basis for future naval limitation rests on the equality of self-defense, equality of security, and on a united purpose to avoid competition in armaments. The only construction we can place on the Japanese thesis is that it represents a desire to obtain overwhelming supremacy in the Orient opening the way

<sup>6</sup> See Department's telegrams no. 186 (supra) and no. 191 (infra) to the Ambassador in Japan.

Italy and probably to Germany and to Russia as well. The Prime Minister felt that for the present a patient attitude toward Japan should be continued, but that if a tripartite agreement became impossible he did not question British parity with America based on the British conceptions of their own risks. Davis stated that we had no desire to impose on the British a treaty incompatible with their national safety, but that we must consider joint adoption of a course by which a naval race with Japan would not be invited. The suggestion was made by the British that when the Americans next met with the Japanese they should urge the latter to contemplate the situation which would result from no treaty. The British had set before the Japanese a face-saving device, but they had adopted an unreceptive attitude toward it. When the Japanese situation should have definitely cleared up, the British agreed on the desirability of tripartite meetings; and they also agreed that for the time being British-American technical discussions would be inadvisable. It is Davis's belief that the British view policy of the Japanese with deep concern, and that in their own minds the British have reached no solution.

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500.41545/254a:Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION  
(DAVIS)  
(EXTRACT-PARAPHRASE)

Washington, November 13, 1934-  
3 p.m.

17. We are convinced by the conversations which have taken place over the past three weeks<sup>6</sup> that practically no chance exists of bridging the definite disagreement between the Japanese delegation on the one hand and the British and ourselves on the other with regard to the fundamentals of future naval limitation. Every opportunity has been afforded the Japanese to explain and to justify Japan's demands; we have not forced the pace and we have not refused them a chance to "save face". We should continue to emphasize our thesis that maintaining the treaties as a basis for future naval limitation rests on the equality of self-defense, equality of security, and on a united purpose to avoid competition in armaments. The only construction we can place on the Japanese thesis is that it represents a desire to obtain overwhelming supremacy in the Orient opening the way

<sup>6</sup> See Department's telegrams no. 186 (supra) and no. 191 (infra) to the Ambassador in Japan.

to preferential rights and privileges and destroying the delicate balance in Asia, both economic and political, which is represented by the other basic principles and policies that are embodied in the Washington and other treaties.

Hull

500.11515/224b:Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW)  
(Paraphrase)

Washington, November 22, 1934  
5 p.m.

191. Summary of developments at London since my telegram no. 186, October 31, 9 p.m. follows:

On October 31, at a meeting of the American and the Japanese delegations, the discussion centered mainly around (1) whether or not technical naval improvements had altered relative security as it was fixed by the naval treaties; and (2) whether or not the Japanese Government would continue to pursue policy of cooperation to adjust problems of international concern or whether it would revert to a course of independent action. Davis put forward the point that it was difficult for us to appreciate Japan's contention that national prestige was affected by a smaller navy; by analogy, he compared our Army with the Japanese Army.

On November 1, Sir John Simon<sup>6a</sup> and Davis met to review the recent British-Japanese meeting. Sir John said that he had taken a more positive attitude vis-a-vis Matsudaira than he had heretofore in order that he might learn the true motives for Japan's demands for parity. He had indicated that if Japan would be content with a face-saving formula, it might be possible to find a way out; but that if the question were one of changing the present status of the naval treaties, the British would have to refuse. Davis was assured by Simon that the British would not essay the role of mediator; that it was the British policy to make no agreement with Japan or with any other power that would adversely affect Anglo-American relations.

On November 6, there was another meeting between Davis and Simon, at which time Simon said that he was going to ask the Japanese if they would be satisfied with a treaty which acknowledged in its preamble the inherent equality of sovereign rights but which would establish respective maximum programs worked out at the existing levels.

<sup>6a</sup> British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

On November 8, Davis was informed by Craigie<sup>7</sup> that the formula referred to by Simon had been proposed to the Japanese.

On November 13, Simon told Davis that in addition to the face-saving device which the British had proposed, they had made inquiry of the Japanese with regard to a nonaggression pact about which Hirowa<sup>7a</sup> has thrown out suggestions from time to time. Sir John had told the Japanese that Japan could not expect Great Britain to enter into an Anglo-Japanese nonaggression pact without the United States, nor could the British enter into such a pact without knowing whether the policies of the participants in it were such as not to provoke aggression. Great Britain was interested in Chinese independence and in the open door, and the British wished to know whether Japan contemplated complete assurance with regard to these points in a proposed pact.

On November 14, the Department advised Davis that he should assume a receptive attitude only in any further discussion on a nonaggression pact and give evidence of no particular interest; that any proposal for a pact of this type should include at least the five powers, among them China, who were most concerned and also a definition of aggression and prescriptions of limitation upon the use of force by any power against another or in the territory of another.

On November 15, there was a further meeting between the British and the Americans. The former pointed out that in the face of Japan's impending denunciation of the Washington Naval Treaty, there were three courses that might be taken: (a) Discussion of a new treaty containing a face-saving device and embodying all the principles of the Washington Treaty; (b) recognition of the situation presented and inaction as to any commitments at present; (c) attempt to come to an agreement which would salvage as much as possible of the Washington and London naval treaties.

On November 17, the Department informed Davis that it was our feeling that the scope of the present conversations did not include the negotiation of a new agreement, based on new principles. It was suggested (our no. 22, November 15<sup>8</sup>) that, if the discussions should turn in the direction of termination of the conversations now taking place, the Department felt that while on the one hand it was important to preserve at least the form of a mere suspension of conversations, on the other it was equally important not to bind ourselves to resume them at a definite date irrespective of developments in the future.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Leslie Craigie, Assistant Under Secretary of State, British Foreign Office.

<sup>7a</sup> Koki Hirota, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>8</sup>



Davis reports that although reports are carried in the press that the Japanese have rejected the British "middle course" feelers, he has not yet been officially informed of their rejection.

Hull

500.A15A5/280a : Telegram  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION  
(DAVIS)

(Paraphrase)

Washington, November 22, 1934-8 p.m.

34. Referring to our today's teletype conversation. It is still our opinion that the course, potentially most advantageous, would be that the Japanese, in view of their intention to denounce the Washington Treaty, be given no encouragement to expect any concessions or to expect the conclusion of a new treaty in substitution for the Washington Treaty; and that the Japanese, as a result of the British and ourselves showing no further solicitude in that connection, be forced to make the denunciation solely on their own responsibility and at a moment, between now and the end of December, of their own choosing.

Insofar as concerns the situation in Japan and in the Far East in general, as distinguished from considerations of internal British politics, we believe that the tactics of exploring possibilities regarding substitutes, et cetera, has already been and would continue to be, if pursued, of less advantage than disadvantage. The same is also true of the situation in the United States.

The end of the first phase would properly be brought about by a clean break through denunciation by the Japanese. To proceed at once with what would be in fact new conversations looking toward a new objective would mean that we had conceded the fundamental Japanese demand in the present conversations, that is, that the existing ratios be given up. Moreover, an immediate beginning of new conversations or negotiations would establish a bad precedent and have a very bad psychological effect. It would mean that the Japanese had been granted a substantial gain and there would be no opportunity for the development which is envisaged by us as likely within a reasonably short time, that is, an approach by the Japanese on their own initiative requesting further naval limitations discussion, resulting in the creation of a setting for such discussions favorable to the viewpoint that naval limitation is desirable. Should our expectation of such a development be disappointed, as time goes on, there is nevertheless, before the termination of existing treaty obligations, a period of two years during which it will be possible to revise plans and estimates.



Therefore, it is not our belief that further British exploration of the "middle course" would be of any practical value unless it is envisaged that it is to be carried out solely for the purpose of filling in the time until such moment as the Japanese, through denunciation of the Washington Treaty, assume the responsibility of breaking off the first phase. Even under those conditions we consider the policy hazardous in that it encourages Japan to believe that the British and perhaps the Americans are unduly perturbed in the face of her apparent determination and her strength. In addition, it would continue to offer opportunity and possible material for suspicion and propaganda.

. . . . .

It is not possible for us to see how the present conversations could either be turned into or immediately followed by negotiations, without the British and American Governments, ipso facto, making concessions, both in principle and in fact, to the Japanese, resulting in the Japanese making definite gains both in appearance and in fact without having made any concessions.

. . . . .

Hull

500.11545/281:Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

London, November 23, 1934

9 p.m.

(Received November 23

7:34 p.m.)

52. My conversation this morning with the Prime Minister and Simon was satisfactory.

Simon gave an outline of the recent Anglo-Japanese conversations, in the course of which Matsudaira, in substance, had stated that: (1) Japan would be unable to accept a contractual limitation of her building program below the common upper limit, although she did not intend to build entirely up to that limit; (2) Japan would find difficulty in agreeing to qualitative limitation without quantitative limitation; (3) Japan would probably be prepared to "negotiate" a continuance of the nonfortification provision, although Matsudaira admitted that he had no definite decision of his Government on this point; and (4) Japan was prepared to agree not to denounce the Four-Power Treaty<sup>9</sup> for the period of a new naval agreement.

Simon added that Matsudaira had very confidentially referred to Japan's isolated position with reference to denunciation of the Washington Treaty, and had inquired whether it was really necessary that

<sup>9</sup> Signed at Washington, December 13, 1921 Foreign Relations, 1922 vol. 1, p. 33

Japan should denounce it single-handed, from which Simon inferred that he had been instructed to find out whether Britain would join in denunciation. Simon replied that Japan had voluntarily announced her ~~arbitrary~~ decision to denounce the treaty before the end of 1934 and that Great Britain could not consider joining in it.

I then summarized to the British the pertinent portions of my recent cables to you setting forth my understanding of the British position and my conviction that they would not enter into any agreement with Japan without the United States, in order that there should be no doubt as to whether I had correctly understood and reported their views. Both MacDonald and Simon declared that my summary and analysis of the British views was accurate in every respect. I presented in substance your views, particularly as set forth in your no. 34 of November 22, and emphasized the inadvisability of negotiating a substitute treaty with the hammer of denunciation of the Washington Treaty hanging over our heads, and that the best hope of an ultimate agreement lay not so much in the search for some formula to satisfy Japan as in Anglo-American cooperation.

The Prime Minister and Simon categorically and, I am convinced, sincerely agreed that it was vital to continue and strengthen Anglo-American cooperation, but without giving grounds for extremists in Japan or sympathizers in England to raise the cry of a common front hostile to Japan. They felt they must avoid the charge that the possibilities of an agreement had been destroyed, not so much through Japanese intransigence, as through lack of patience on the part of the United States and Great Britain. They said they were now satisfied there was no essential difference between the two Governments as to the fundamental issues and that it was simply a question of immediate method. In substance they favored stalling along "to give Japan enough rope". They did not feel it would be wise to break off negotiations immediately, for apart from the English political and public opinion they had to satisfy, there were the further questions, already posed to Japan, for instance, as to the nonfortifications provision, and as to Japan's policy toward China, and they would obviously have to await an answer. MacDonald said that he did not agree with my estimate as to the effect in Japan of sending them home empty handed, that there were some who felt that the Japanese militarists would like to tear up the treaty and not be bound in any respect whatever, and that it would be helpful to the moderate element as opposed to the military element for us to try to find some form of agreement. Simon suggested that this point might be discussed confidentially with Matsudaira. MacDonald continued that the Cabinet were completely preoccupied at the moment with the debate on the India report, which would reach its most critical stage next week, and which was of vital im-

portance to the national Government. In addition, preparations for the royal wedding were also taking a great deal of their time. Finally, they argued that even if the present conversations were to end now, the United States delegation must remain here to consider with them our respective naval policies and attitude in the future, with particular reference to any new conference arising under the Washington Treaty. Macdonald said definitely he hoped that if the Washington Treaty system were scrapped, and the two nations were faced with a dangerous situation in the Far East, we would be more generous to England in the matter of tonnage.

I stated that we had no wish to break off the negotiations hastily, but that instead of trying to reach an agreement now it would be advisable to impress the Japanese with the seriousness of the situation they were creating, and to point out to them that it was not merely a question of naval limitation, but that by denouncing the Washington Treaty they were placing in jeopardy the entire collective system which had been set up by the Washington Conference for the promotion of peace and stability in the Far East. Macdonald said that he had taken this position for some time, and Simon pointed to his statement in the House yesterday, particularly where he had said that Great Britain "would regard the breakdown of the system of naval limitation as a great disaster for everybody." I suggested that we might even consider bringing about a termination of the conversations with a statement of such a friendly and pacific nature that it would appeal to the moral sense of the entire world and at the same time could not possibly be taken amiss by the military party in Japan, while greatly assisting the moderate element.

(Paraphrase.) The British have not stressed so strongly at any time in the earlier conversations their seemingly most genuine reasons for pursuing the talks with the Japanese, but they were willing to give more weight and consideration to our arguments and were much less insistent upon endeavoring to arrive at an agreement with the Japanese now. They said in fact that we should be able to reach a complete meeting of minds on this matter within a few days.

They have not expressed so forcibly at any other meeting the regret which they would feel regarding a withdrawal on our part during the life of the conversations, beyond the limited holiday period at Christmas time which might be agreed upon. (End paraphrase.)

At the conclusion of our conversation, Simon mentioned the possibility of my making a statement to the press, expressing my appreciation and support of his remarks on the naval conversations in the House yesterday, and it was agreed that I should make an appreciative reference along these lines in the course of my press conference this evening.

Davis



500.41545/281:Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION  
(DAVIS)

(Paraphrase)

Washington, November 26, 1934

7. p.m.

37. With reference to your telegram of November 23, 9 p.m., no. 52. The conversation which you had with Simon and MacDonald definitely shows that the American and the British positions more nearly approach each other than for some time and I am encouraged correspondingly. The tone of press comment regarding Anglo-American cooperation is favorable also. As is shown by the attitude of Matsuoka, the Japanese are showing signs, at the thought of their isolated position, of being worried and nervous. The more they are uneasy, the sooner they may become willing to approach in the spirit of cooperation the problems involved. For the last three years, with conspicuous lack of success, the idea has been tried that the moderate Japanese element, now silent and in eclipse, would, through concessions made to Japan, be encouraged to oppose the Japanese military elements. According to our belief and information, furthermore, military psychology and military elements are stronger today in Japan than has been the case for a long time.

It is <sup>not</sup> possible to say that lack of patience has been shown by us. Every opportunity to present the Japanese case has been given them.

The British point of view that conversations should not be broken off right away has been accepted by us, even though public opinion has been somewhat confused as a result, and the fact that it is Japan which desires to do away with the treaties and the principles of limitation on which they are based has been obscured. Until the Japanese denounce the Washington Treaty we are prepared to continue the London conversations. The "life of the conversations" to which MacDonald has referred will thus have been terminated, and thereby the conversations will have been broken off by Japan's own act. Immediately after or at the time of Japanese denunciation, which should place clearly upon the Japanese the blame for a breakdown of the present negotiations, a statement of the type which you suggest in the sixth paragraph of your telegram no. 52 might well be made. You might find some occasion, at the same time or even earlier perhaps, publicly to emphasize the fundamental difference between equality of security and equality of armament, indicating that during these conversations our efforts have in a most friendly way been directed toward the maintenance of the standard of equality of security. Should you have any concrete suggestions regarding the way to block out such a statement so as best to convey the impressions you had in mind I should be glad to receive them. It would seem that a joint statement by the Ameri-

can and British delegations would be called for, if a tripartite statement cannot be agreed to.

In all events, it is our feeling that you should refrain from doing anything which would diminish the embarrassment of the Japanese, as the time of denunciation approaches, or which would associate the British and ourselves with the act of and responsibility for denunciation.

Hull

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500.A15A5/293:Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

(Paraphrase)

London, November 30, 1934-9 p.m.

(Received November 30-4.45 p.m.)

55. This afternoon Matsudaira called to bring me abreast of his recent conversations with the British. The Japanese Government, he said, had not yet come to a final conclusion on the "middle course" proposals of the British, but had instructed him to inform the latter that Japan was prepared to continue to explore the possibilities of agreement along the lines of what the British had suggested. He had brought up in discussion the possibility of a long-term treaty which would embody the principle of equality that was a part of the British formula. The naval construction programs to be annexed to the treaty would be fixed, however, for a five-year period only, as Japan, while recognizing that her proposal for a common upper limit would not be found acceptable, and while she was not expecting to reach that limit for years to come, if ever, did not wish to commit herself indefinitely to principle of an inferior ratio.

Simon, who was absent from London yesterday, has asked that I see him tomorrow.

Davis

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500.A15A5/295:Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

(Paraphrase)

London, December 1, 1934-9 p.m.

Received 10:49 p.m.

58. I was informed by Sir John Simon today of the last conversations which he had had with the Japanese delegation, which conversations substantially confirmed what had been told me by Matsudaira (reference is made to my telegram no. 55 of November 30), with the following additions to my conversation.



Yamamoto, replying to a question put by Simon as to whether the building programs of the Three Powers would be kept on parallel lines, stated that Japan felt that the American and British programs might be lowered by degrees and the Japanese program increased by degrees so that ultimately they might reach the same level in the course of years. Since he could not accept such a contention, Simon did not pursue the subject further.

With regard to the inquiry he had made concerning the integrity of China, Simon told me that he had received no satisfaction from the Japanese. Simon was informed by Matsudaira that of course there was no intention whatever on the part of Japan of interfering in China with British interests. The reply made by Simon was that he was not asking Matsudaira about British rights but that he would like to know, since Great Britain was a party to the Nine-Power Treaty<sup>9a</sup> which gave her certain responsibilities and rights, what the Japanese policy was to be with regard to the integrity of China, entirely apart from the question of Manchukuo. No satisfactory not clear-cut reply was received by Simon.

The impression made upon me by Simon was that he felt less hopeful concerning the possibility of agreement with Japan than heretofore and he stated specifically that it was going to be difficult and embarrassing for the Japanese to give satisfaction concerning China, to which considerable importance was attached by Great Britain. Our information, I told him, was that Japan was increasingly embarrassed as concerned denunciation and that we considered it essential that neither the British nor ourselves should do anything to relieve the Japanese of this embarrassment by reaching any agreement with them beforehand which would only serve as a cushion to break the fall of the Japanese. Agreement as to this was indicated by Simon.

Regarding another meeting between our two delegations, Simon stated that he would speak to MacDonald concerning this and would probably inform me on December 3 as to the Prime Minister's decision.

Davis

500. A1545/310 Telegram  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE

(Paraphrase)

London, December 5, 1934-7 p.m.  
(Received 3:45 p.m.)

66. This morning I made a visit to Matsudaira and informed him that whenever Japan gives notification of denunciation, on or before

<sup>9a</sup> Signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, Foreign Relations, 1922  
vol. I, p. 276

Yamamoto, replying to a question put by Simon as to whether the building programs of the Three Powers would be kept on parallel lines, stated that Japan felt that the American and British programs might be lowered by degrees and the Japanese program increased by degrees so that ultimately they might reach the same level in the course of years. Since he could not accept such a contention, Simon did not pursue the subject further.

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Davis

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THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE

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London, December 5, 1934-7 p.m.  
(Received 3:45 p.m.)

66. This morning I made a visit to Matsudaira and informed him that whenever Japan gives notification of denunciation, on or before

<sup>9a</sup>Signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, Foreign Relations, 1922  
vol. I, p. 276

December 31, the United States will construe this as tantamount to a termination of the negotiations and will expect adjournment to take place immediately thereafter.

In replying, Matsudaira stated that it had been his assumption that as it was compulsory under the Washington Treaty to call a conference within a year after denunciation, the United States would continue the conversations as preparatory to this meeting. My reply was, would Japan wish, under the terms of the Washington Treaty, to request a conference. Matsudaira said he doubted this, because the inference would be that the Japanese had receded from the position taken by them. The other powers for like reasons might possibly feel the same way. I stated. The hope was expressed by Matsudaira that we might succeed in laying the basis of an understanding which would enable us to reconvene within the next few months and thus avoid embarrassment to the Governments interested in the matter. I informed Matsudaira, in conclusion, that while I had no desire to say anything which might influence in one way or the other the Japanese Government, I was of the opinion that I should let him know that until his Government wished to terminate the conversations they should not denounce the treaty. Matsudaira stated that he was glad to learn of this and that, although the Japanese Government could not delay denunciation beyond December 31, he did not believe that denunciation would be made in less than two weeks.

Davis

500.A15A5/321½

SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR. NORMAN H. DAVIS AT LONDON ON DECEMBER 6, 1934<sup>10</sup>

There seems to be some confusion of thought with regard to the matters at issue in the naval conversations, arising primarily from lack of clear understanding of the fundamental difference between "equality of security" and "equality of armaments".

The difficulties in the present conversations cannot be understood without appreciating what took place at the Conference held in Washington in 1922, which was the first successful effort ever made to reduce and limit navies.

The object of that Conference was to put an end to a ruinous naval race that was impeding recovery from the World War, and to establish a sound basis for peace in the Pacific and the Far East.

It was at that time recognized and admitted by the representatives of Great Britain, Japan, and the United States,--the three naval powers most directly concerned,--that it was not possible to reach

<sup>10</sup>

at a luncheon given by the Association of American Correspondents in London to the members of the American delegation in the preliminary naval conversations.

agreement through an academic discussion of what each country considered its needs to be or what it required to satisfy national pride.

Experience having indicated that a satisfactory solution of the problems of political stability and of relative naval strength could not be expected through a continuance of the naval race, there were sought agreements with regard to political questions together with naval questions, on a basis of which not only could political stability be attained and the naval race be brought to an end but naval strength be reduced. The principle adopted was that of equality of security.

In order that each nation might be warranted in subscribing to qualifications of its sovereign right to maintain such a Navy as it saw fit and at the same time feel reasonably ensured against aggression, there was concluded a group of agreements, the purpose of which was to remove the causes and the incentive for aggression by establishing a collective system for cooperation among the nations concerned in promoting and maintaining conditions of peace in the Pacific and the Far East. These agreements established an equilibrium of political and economic rights and made possible naval limitation on the basis of essential equality of security. The Washington Conference was a success because the nations represented there approached in a broad and practical way the problems that confronted them. No nation attempted to impose its will on the others, but each was willing to contribute something substantial to the achievement of the ends desired. At that time the United States had actually under construction tonnage which would have given her naval primacy but which in the interests of international limitation of armaments and a generally agreed upon policy of cooperative effort was voluntarily relinquished.

The United States does not believe and does not contend that any Power should against its will enter into or renew a treaty the provisions of which it does not consider advantageous to itself or beneficial to the world in general. It would, however, greatly regret and regard as most unfortunate the destruction of this system of naval limitation which has proved generally beneficial and which has not jeopardized the security of any nation. We do not question, in fact we affirm the inherent right of any and every Power to equality of security. This, I am sure, we have made abundantly plain. The essence of the Washington treaty system was equality of security under conditions of cooperation. The provisions of the treaties negotiated and agreed upon in 1922 were worked out by leading statesmen of nine Powers assisted by a large number of political and technical experts, working over a period of several months. They were agreed upon and ratified by nine governments and were later adhered to by five others. The naval treaty was the work of five principal naval Powers, Japan, Great Britain, France, Italy, and the United States. None of these could have



accepted and agreed to the provisions of that treaty had it felt that its national security was thereby menaced or impaired. Any basic alteration in this system must of necessity alter the security thus established.

The fundamental issue in the naval conversations now in progress is essentially as follows: Is the equilibrium that was established by the system worked out in the Washington treaties to be continued or is it to be upset. The American Government stands for continuance. The only alternative that has so far been suggested is that of a new naval agreement based on the principle of equality in naval armaments, a principle which if adopted and applied would not give equality of security.

The United States favors a progressive reduction in naval armaments in accordance with the principles established in both the Washington and London Treaties, and, under instructions from the President, I have proposed a substantial all-around reduction in naval armaments to be effected in such a way as not to alter the relative strengths or to jeopardize the security of the participating nations as established by these treaties. Failing agreement upon any reduction, I have made known that we would nevertheless be prepared to abide by the Washington Treaty and to renew the London Treaty with only such modifications in detail as circumstances require and as meet the wholehearted support of the other parties thereto.

We believe that only the maintenance of the system of equality of security, with proportionate reductions downward of naval strength if possible, can there be maintained the substantial foundation for security and peace which has thus far been laid. We believe that the course taken in 1922 was in the right direction; that the supplementary agreements made in 1930 were an improvement; that the system thus established has been of advantage to all concerned; and that abandonment now of the principles involved would lead to conditions of insecurity, of international suspicion, and of costly competition, with no real advantage to any nation.

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500.11545/333 Telegram  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION  
(DAVIS)

(Extract-Paraphrase)

Washington, December 15, 1934-6 p.m.

55. Reference is made to your telegram of December 15, 8 a.m., no. 74<sup>11</sup>. We are prepared, subject to an advance agreement regarding

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<sup>11</sup>Not printed.

accepted and agreed to the provisions of that treaty had it felt that its national security was thereby menaced or impaired. Any basic alteration in this system must of necessity alter the security thus established.

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500.11545/333:Telegram  
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(DAVIS)

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500.1545/333 Telegram  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION  
(DAVIES)

(Extract-Paraphrase)

Washington, December 15, 1934-6 p.m.

55. Reference is made to your telegram of December 15, 8 a.m., no. 7411. We are prepared, subject to an advance agreement regarding

<sup>11</sup>Not printed.

accepted and agreed to the provisions of that treaty had it felt that its national security was thereby menaced or impaired. Any basic alteration in this system must of necessity alter the security thus established.

The fundamental issue in the naval conversations now in progress is essentially as follows: Is the equilibrium that was established by the system worked out in the Washington treaties to be continued or is it to be upset. The American Government stands for continuance. The only alternative that has so far been suggested is that of a new naval agreement based on the principle of equality in naval armaments, a principle which if adopted and applied would not give equality of security.

The United States favors a progressive reduction in naval armaments in accordance with the principles established in both the Washington and London Treaties, and, under instructions from the President, I have proposed a substantial all-around reduction in naval armaments to be effected in such a way as not to alter the relative strengths or to jeopardize the security of the participating nations as established by these treaties. Failing agreement upon any reduction, I have made known that we would nevertheless be prepared to abide by the Washington Treaty and to renew the London Treaty with only such modifications in detail as circumstances require and as meet the wholehearted support of the other parties thereto.

We believe that only the maintenance of the system of equality of security, with proportionate reductions downward of naval strength if possible, can there be maintained the substantial foundation for security and peace which has thus far been laid. We believe that the course taken in 1922 was in the right direction; that the supplementary agreements made in 1930 were an improvement; that the system thus established has been of advantage to all concerned; and that abandonment now of the principles involved would lead to conditions of insecurity, of international suspicion, and of costly competition, with no real advantage to any nation.

500.11545/333 Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION  
(DAVES)

(Extract-Paraphrase)

Washington, December 15, 1934-6 p.m.

55. Reference is made to your telegram of December 15, 8 a.m., no. 7411. We are prepared, subject to an advance agreement regarding

<sup>11</sup>Not printed.



a satisfactory communique, to accede to the British idea of bringing the present conversations to an end through a tripartite meeting on December 19 or 20. That time will be close enough to the Japanese denunciation to render the connection between the two events clear in the mind of the public without the necessity of its being stressed openly. Our meeting the British on this basis should render it easier for them to meet us in our preoccupations concerning the communique's content.

Hull

500.41545/275

APPENDIX TO MEMORANDUM OF MEETING OF THE AMERICAN, BRITISH,  
AND JAPANESE DELEGATIONS

COMMUNIQUE

A meeting took place at the House of Commons this afternoon, under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister, to discuss matters connected with the adjournment of the Preliminary Naval Conversations. The following were present at the meeting:-

United States:	Mr. Norman Davis, Admiral Standley, Mr. Ray Atherton, Mr. Dooman, Commander Schuirmann, Lt.-Commander Duncan, Mr. Field, Mr. Reber.
Japan:	Mr. Matsudaira, Vice-Admiral Yamamoto, Mr. S. Kato Captain Iwashita, Mr. Mizota.
United Kingdom:	The Prime Minister, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, The First Lord of the Admiralty, Admiral Sir Ernle Chatfield, Sir Warren Fisher, Vice-Admiral Little, Mr. Craigie.

At the end of the meeting the following communique was issued.

The naval conversations, which were started last June, and, after a recess, have been proceeding since October 23rd, are agreed by the representatives of all three Governments to have served a useful purpose. These conversations, which were initiated under the London

Naval Treaty of 1930, became broadened in scope in the light of proposals and suggestions subsequently made. Every aspect of the naval problem has been discussed between the parties frankly, fully and amicably. It was never the purpose of these preliminary conversations to reach any hard and fast conclusion: the sole purpose was to prepare the ground for future negotiation and agreement. The French and Italian Governments, who were also signatories of the present naval treaties and were associated with the discussions in the summer, have been kept informed of all developments.

Although the three Governments represented in these conversations are in favour of a continuation of naval limitation with such reduction as can be agreed upon by all the Powers concerned, the principle and methods for achieving this in the future remain to be determined. Now that the respective views have been made known and fully discussed, the conversations have reached a stage when it is felt that there should be an adjournment in order that the delegates may resume personal contact with their Governments and the resulting situation can be fully analysed and further considered. It has therefore been agreed to adjourn the conversations at this point.

The Governments concerned in the London conversations will keep in close touch with each other and with the other Governments which are parties to the London and Washington Naval Treaties. The adjournment will also give His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom an opportunity for further consultation with the Governments of the Dominions. It is hoped that, in view of the preparatory work accomplished during the conversations which have already taken place, the situation will so develop as to justify a subsequent meeting as soon as the opportune moment arrives. In that event the Government of the United Kingdom which initiated the present conversations, will take the appropriate steps.

19 December, 1934

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500.A4B/588 : Telegram  
THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
(Paraphrase)

Tokyo, December 19, 1934-7 p.m.  
(Received December 19-7:18 a.m.)

280. This morning the Privy Council in Plenary Session gave unanimous approval to the Government's decision to abrogate the Washington Naval Treaty and so advised the Emperor. The draft instructions to Saito,<sup>12</sup> I understand, will be submitted to the Cabinet

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<sup>12</sup>Hirosi Saito, Japanese Ambassador to the United States

either December 21 or 22, but when the formal notice will be conveyed to the Department is not yet decided.

It is my impression that Hirota desires to delay, if possible, the formal notice of abrogation until after the adjournment of the present conversations in London in order to avoid the charge that they were disrupted by Japan's action.

Grew

500.A4B/603

THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR (SAITO) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
no. 250

Washington, December 29, 1934.

Sir: I have the honor, under instructions from my Government, to communicate to you the following:-

In accordance with Article XXIII of the Treaty concerning the Limitation of Naval Armament, signed at Washington on the 6th February, 1922, the Government of Japan hereby give notice to the Government of the United States of America of their intention to terminate the said Treaty, which will accordingly cease to be in force after the 31st December, 1936.

Accept (etc.)

Saito

500.A4B/604

THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR (SAITO) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
NOTE VERBALE

Washington, December 29, 1934.

I have been telegraphically instructed by Mr. Hirota to say to you, on the occasion of handing you the written notice of the intention of the Japanese Government to terminate the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, in the following sense with suitable amplifications:-

As has already been made known to the American Delegation in London, the basic policy of the Japanese Government in the present disarmament negotiations consists in the discontinuance of the ratio system and the total abolition or the utmost limitation of aggressive war vessels. From that point of view, the Japanese Government considers it inadmissible to have the Treaty continue in force.

The Japanese Government entertains the desire that the preliminary negotiations shall be conducted in the friendliest spirit possible and, to that end, wished that all Powers concerned would conjointly make the notification of treaty termination. The proposal has not been accepted by any of the Powers, and the Japanese Government has been constrained to act singly in giving notice in accordance with the provisions of Article 23 of the Treaty itself.

It is, however, a matter of course that the Japanese Government has no intention whatever to proceed to naval aggrandisement or to disturb international peace. It will continue in its sincere endeavors to strengthen the relationships of peace and amity among all Powers, by participating as heretofore in the friendly negotiations with the other Powers concerned in which it will strive for the conclusion with them of a new agreement, just, fair and adequate in conception and consonant with the spirit of disarmament, to replace the Washington Treaty.

500.A4B/603

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR (SAITO)

Washington, December 29, 1934.

Excellency: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's note of December 29, informing me that the Government of Japan gives notice to the Government of the United States of America of its intention to terminate the Treaty limiting naval armament signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, which will accordingly cease to be in force after the thirty-first of December, 1936.

In accordance with the pertinent provision of Article 23 of the Treaty, I am today transmitting to the other Powers a certified copy of this notification and am informing them of the date on which it has been received.<sup>14</sup>

Accept (etc.)

Cordell Hull

500.A4B/603:Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW)

Washington, December 29, 1934

5 p.m.

218. The following was released to the Press this afternoon:

"Statement of the Secretary of State relative to the Japanese Government's notice of intention to terminate the Washington Naval Treaty:

The American Government has today received the Japanese Government's notice of intention to terminate the Washington Naval Treaty. We of course, realize that any nation has the right not to renew a treaty; also that any movement toward disarmament to be successful must rest on agreements voluntarily entered into. This notification is none the less a source of genuine regret to us, believing as we do that the existing treaties have safeguarded the rights and promoted the collective interests of all of the signatories.

<sup>14</sup>Notes to the British, French, and Italian Ambassadors, and the Canadian and South African Ministers, not printed.



The recent conversations at London which have been carried on in a spirit of friendship and goodwill have revolved around the question whether a movement of international cooperation and disarmament can rest on the principle of equality of armament rather than on the principle of equality of security. Each nation naturally desires, and we stand unalterably for that view, to be on a basis of absolute equality with other nations in the matter of national security. Experience teaches that conditions of peace or measures of disarmament cannot be promoted by the doctrine that all nations, regardless of their varying and different defensive needs, shall have equality of armaments. What has been achieved up to the present time toward insuring conditions of peace has been based on a community of objective, a community of conception of the general interest, and a community of effort. The treaties thus far concluded have involved no invasion of the sovereign rights of the participating governments and they have provided, with all proper respect for such sovereign rights, that the armaments of the participating nations be established by voluntary undertaking on a proportionate basis.

Notice of intention to terminate the Washington Naval Treaty does not mean that the Treaty ceases to be in effect as of the date of notification: the provisions of that Treaty remain in force until the end of 1936. There consequently remains a period of two years within which the interested nations may consider the situation that would be created by the abandonment of the naval treaties; and the American Government is ready to enter upon negotiations whenever it appears that there is prospect of arrival at a mutually satisfactory conclusion which would give further effect to the desire of the American Government and the American people and, it is believed, that of the other Governments and peoples concerned—that the nations of the world shall not be burdened by avoidable or extravagant expenditures on armament.

The question presented, when the Washington Treaties were negotiated and which prompted each delegation to the signing and each country to the ratifying of those treaties, was that of promoting peace through disarmament and cooperative effort along certain defined lines. The objectives then and there envisaged are still fundamental among the objectives of the foreign policy of the United States. To this high purpose the people of this country, in a spirit of sincere friendship toward all other peoples, will continue unswervingly to devote their own efforts, and earnestly invoke like efforts on the part of others."

Hull

500.A15A5/502 : Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN GREAT BRITAIN (BINGHAM)

Washington, October 3, 1935-7 p.m.

284. Yesterday the Japanese Ambassador called and stated that his Government had received word from the British Government that they were discussing with us the pros and cons of a conference. The Ambassador asked to be informed with regard to (1) our attitude toward a conference and (2) our attitude toward qualitative limitation. I told the Ambassador that as far as our position was concerned we had made no change from the attitude we had taken generally in the bilateral conversations in London and there were no new developments since then with respect to a conference which the other interested Governments did not know. On further reflections, however, it appeared to me to be wise to give the Japanese Government perhaps a slightly more definite reply to their queries and I have this morning asked the Japanese Ambassador to come to the Department and have given him the following information with regard to his two questions:

"We have learned from our Embassy at London that it is the desire of the British to hold a naval conference before the end of the year. We are inclined to concur in the desirability of such a conference, particularly in view of the fact that both naval treaties provide for a conference before the end of this year. We recognize that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to reach at the present time a comprehensive naval agreement along the lines heretofore followed. It is, however, very important for all naval powers concerned not to permit the naval treaties to terminate completely with the result that the whole naval situation would be thrown open again. It would therefore be the part of wisdom to seek agreements on those elements of the naval question for which a solution can now be found for the purpose of avoiding and unrestricted naval race. We should at least be able to tide the situation over for a brief period in the hope that by the time circumstances will be more favorable for a more comprehensive agreement.

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<sup>15</sup>

See also Department of State Conference Series No. 24, The London Naval Conference 1935, Report of the Delegates of the United States of America, Text of the London Naval Treaty of 1936 and Other Documents (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1936).

"As to qualitative limitation, it is still our view that both quantitative and qualitative limitation should be continued. In view of the fact that the questions that have arisen between the naval powers relate more to quantitative limitation than to qualitative limitation, it should not prove particularly difficult to work out for a limited period a mutually satisfactory understanding for continuing existing types with such reductions or modifications as might be found desirable and mutually agreeable."

You may convey to the British Government my reply as given above to the Japanese Ambassador, as I told the Ambassador that I was today informing the British Government of my response to his inquiry.

Hull

500.1545/536

THE AMBASSADOR IN GREAT BRITAIN (BINGHAM) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
no. 1776

London, October, 24, 1935.

(Received November 6.)

Sir: I have the honor to refer to my telegram no. 535, October 24, 4 p.m.<sup>16</sup> and to forward herewith the text of the invitation to a naval conference referred to therein.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:  
Ray Atherton  
Counselor of Embassy

(Enclosure)

THE BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (HOARE) TO  
THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR (BINGHAM)  
A 8984/22/45

London, 24 October, 1935.

Your Excellency: His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have been giving careful consideration to the results of the preliminary bilateral conversations which have been proceeding between representatives of the signatory Powers of the Washington and London Naval Treaties<sup>17</sup> to prepare the way for a Naval Conference. In view of the express provisions of Article XXIII of the Washington Naval Treaty and of the corresponding article in the London Naval Treaty, the effect of which is, in the circumstances which have occurred, that the signatory Powers must meet in conference during the present year, and in view of the fact that this country has so far taken the initiative in arranging for these bilateral discussions, His Majesty's Government are prepared to summon a Conference to meet

<sup>16</sup> Not printed

<sup>17</sup> Department of State Treaty Series Nos. 671 and 830, respectively.

in London on the 2nd December next.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of this Conference would be to secure agreement on as many aspects as possible of naval limitation with a view to the conclusion of an international treaty which would take the place of the two Naval Treaties expiring at the end of 1936. It is hoped that, once agreement is in sight between the representatives of the signatory Powers, an extension of the scope of the Conference may be possible so as to include representatives of the other Naval Powers.

2. I should be grateful if Your Excellency would be so good as to inform me as soon as possible whether the United States Government are prepared to be represented at the proposed Conference.

3. I have the honour at the same time to suggest that it may prove convenient to all concerned and may serve to keep the size of each Delegation as small as possible if Your Excellency's Government and the Governments of France, Italy and Japan were to be represented by their Ambassadors in London. It would furthermore be very desirable that there should be present at the Conference from the outset naval representatives or advisers of sufficient rank to speak authoritatively on behalf of their respective Governments.

I have (etc)

(For the Secretary of State)  
R. L. Craigie

500.11545/549

THE CHARGE IN JAPAN (NEVILLE) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
no. 1539

Tokyo, November 2, 1935.  
(Received November 18.)

Sir: I have the honor to observe that with Japan's acceptance on October 29 of the British Government's invitation to participate in the formal naval disarmament conference required by the Treaties, and which is to be held on December 2, next, the attitude of the Japanese Government is one of quiet assurance and satisfaction that everything possible has been done to protect Japan's interests in the field of naval affairs. The Government can point to a course of action since the question became active in June, 1934, of consistency and of singleness of purpose surely impressive enough to satisfy the most ardent chauvinist in the navy. When Japan was first approached on the question of her naval policy she established the principle that the basis of all future discussion and the prime requisite for any agreement with the Powers was to be the abolition of the ratio principle and the establishment of a common upper limit of global tonnage; and now, on the eve of the Conference, and after some eighteen months of discussion during which British efforts were directed toward finding some formula for effecting a compromise between the fundamentally

<sup>18</sup> The opening date of the Conference was later postponed to December 7, 1935.



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<sup>18</sup> The opening date of the Conference was later postponed to December 7, 1935.

divergent views held by the three major powers, the situation remains unchanged so far as Japanese policy is concerned.

In reviewing the most recent events leading up to the final acceptance by Japan of the invitation to participate in the Conference next month it is interesting to observe the recurring differences which cropped out between the views of the Navy Ministry and those of the Foreign Office, differences which, it will be recalled, occurred last year in the question of when Japan should give notice of abrogation of the Washington Treaty.<sup>19</sup> Once more, while it was more a question of differences of method rather than of objective, it seems clear that the influence of Mr. Hirota was successful in restraining the more unyielding attitude apparently adopted by the naval authorities regarding the question of participation in the Conference. While it has been felt that Japan would participate, and in fact was anxious to have the Conference held in accordance with the terms of the Treaties, there remained the question of the terms upon which she would consent to negotiate.

On September 26, last, when Great Britain first approached the Japanese Government inquiring as to its willingness to participate, it was reported that the Government's attitude at that time was to the effect that "Japan sees no value in a conference not committed beforehand to negotiations of a naval limitation agreement based upon proposals offered by the Japanese delegates at the preliminary conversations of last year. The British plan for unilateral declaration of building plans up to 1942 is not acceptable to the Japanese Government. No other formula has been devised to solve the conflict between Japan's desire for a common upper limit and the United States' desire for the virtual retention of the existing ratios". The British note was believed to have represented Great Britain's last attempt to induce the Japanese Government to alter its stand prior to the issuance of the invitations and to have included a proposal that Japan withdraw from her position that the Powers concerned accept her demand for a common upper limit as a prerequisite to Japan's participation in the Conference. The attitude outlined above undoubtedly represented the attitude of the naval authorities and at the time there were hints in the press that the Foreign Office did not entirely share the views of the Navy Department.

On October 10 the Navy Department was reported in the press as stating categorically that "the Ministry must insist upon a previous understanding to abolish the ratio system and to substitute the common upper limit principle" before accepting and invitation to participate in the Conference. However, a few days after this the Foreign Office spokesman stated that while the Japanese Government continued to insist upon the "realization of the proposal broached at the preliminary conversations at London last year" nevertheless the Government was

<sup>19</sup>See pp. 249 ff.

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<sup>19</sup>See pp. 249 ff.



prepared to participate in a formal naval conference "if it is understood that it reserves the right to insist upon the proposals mentioned above. It is prepared to participate because the Conference is called for by the Treaties". It is at this point that what foreign observers have described a "shift of emphasis" first became apparent. That is to say that the hope might be entertained that Japan would accept an invitation to participate without insisting upon previous acceptance of certain conditions laid down by her. This was borne out in the reported reply sent on October 16 when the Japanese Government indicated that "Japan is ready to respond to a proposal for the convocation of a formal naval parley in the belief that Japan's equitable claim regarding the naval question will be fully understood and recognized by the Powers during the course of negotiations". This is obviously the formula devised by the Foreign Office authorities to the effect a compromise with the Navy Department.

Prior to the official announcement from London that formal invitations for the Conference to be held on December 2 were issued, the Japanese press carried practically no editorial comment on naval affairs. But with the acceptance by Japan on October 29 of this formal invitation the press has indicated its approval of the Government's action although it is unanimous in doubting that any concrete results will be obtained. It seems to be generally agreed that Japan's point of view is about as equally irreconcilable with that of Great Britain as with that of the United States; there is, however, an occasional note of pique directed at the United States for insisting upon the maintenance of the ratio system and a slightly greater understanding of the needs of Great Britain for a larger navy.

While it would be as unwise as it is impossible to predict Japan's course of action at the forthcoming Conference, the Embassy is satisfied that there will be no appreciable alteration of her present stand and that no substantial concessions will be made in an effort either to reach a new agreement or to avoid the entrance upon a non-treaty status at the expiration of the Treaties at the end of 1936.

Respectfully yours,

Edwin L. Neville

500.A15A5/566a : Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN GREAT BRITAIN (BINGHAM)

Washington, November 30, 1935-4 p.m.

373. Following is the text of the opening speech of the American Delegation to the Naval Conference:<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Speech delivered by Mr. Norman H. Davis, Chairman of the American delegation, at the first plenary session, December 9, 1935.



Mr. Chairman:

In searching for appropriate words in which to express most clearly the attitude and aspirations of the American Government and people in respect to naval disarmament, I find that I cannot improve upon the letter of guidance which the President addressed to me fourteen months ago when I sailed for London to participate in preliminary conversations between the Governments of the United Kingdom, Japan and the United States. That letter, written on October 5th, 1934, was as follows:

"In asking you to return to London to continue and expand the conversations begun last June preparatory to the Naval Conference in 1935, I am fully aware of the gravity of the problems before you and your British and Japanese colleagues. The object of next year's Conference is 'to frame a new Treaty to replace and carry out the purposes of the present Treaty'. The purposes themselves are 'to prevent the dangers and to reduce the burdens inherent in competitive armament' and 'to carry forward the work begun by the Washington Naval Conference and to facilitate progressive realization of general limitation and reduction of armament.'"

"The Washington Naval Conference of 1922 brought to the world the first important voluntary agreement for limitation and reduction of armament. It stands out as a milestone in civilization.

"It was supplemented by the London Naval Treaty of 1930, which recognized the underlying thought that the good work begun should be progressive—in other words, that further limitation and reduction should be sought.

"Today the United States adheres to that goal. That must be our first consideration.

"The Washington and London Treaties were not mere mathematical formulae. The limitations fixed on the relative Naval Forces were based on the comparative defensive needs of the Powers concerned; they did not involve the sacrifice of any vital interests on the part of their participants; they left the relative security of the great Naval Powers unimpaired.

"The abandonment of these Treaties would throw the principle of relative security wholly out of balance; it would result in competitive Naval building, the consequence of which no one can foretell.

"I ask you, therefore, at the first opportunity to propose to the British and Japanese a substantial proportional reduction in the present Naval levels. I suggest a total tonnage reduction of twenty percent below existing Treaty tonnage. If it is not possible to agree on this percentage, please seek from the British and Japanese a lesser reduction—fifteen percent or ten percent or five percent. The United States must adhere to the high purpose of progressive reduction. It will be a heartening thing to the people of the world if you and your colleagues can attain this end.

"Only if all else fails should you seek to secure agreement providing for the maintenance and extension of existing Treaties over as long a period as possible.

"I am compelled to make one other point clear. I cannot approve, nor would I be willing to submit to the Senate of the United States any new Treaty calling for larger Navies. Governments impelled by common sense and the good of humanity ought to seek Treaties reducing armaments; they have no right to seek Treaties increasing armaments.

"Excessive armaments are in themselves conducive to those fears and suspicions which breed war. Competition in armament is a still greater menace. The world would rightly reproach Great Britain, Japan and the United States if we moved against the current of progressive thought. We three Nations, the principal Naval Powers, have nothing to fear from one another. We cannot escape our responsibilities, joint and several, for world peace and recovery.

"I am convinced that if the basic principle of continued naval limitation with progressive reduction can be adhered to this year and the next, the technicalities of ship tonnage, of ship classes, of gun calibers and of other weapons, can be solved by friendly conference. I earnestly hope that France and Italy, which are full parties to the Washington Treaty, will see their way to participate fully in our efforts to achieve further naval limitation and reduction.

"The important matter to keep constantly before your eyes is the principle of reduction--the maintenance of one of the greatest achievements of friendly relations between nations.

"Sincerely yours,

(signed)

Franklin D. Roosevelt "

The views set forth in this letter are still expressive of what the United States would like to see accomplished. Therein, there has been no change. But it would be unrealistic not to recognize that the situation existing at the time the letter was written has undergone considerable modification. The conversations last year were based on the London Naval Treaty, due to expire by automatic limitation at the end of 1936. Since then the Washington Treaty has been denounced and will expire at the close of next year; certain fundamental principles on which both treaties rest have been questioned; in the wake of the political instability in various parts of the world, there is a tendency to increase rather than to reduce naval armaments; and the divergences which have developed are such as to increase the difficulties which confront us in seeking to reach agreement for a comprehensive naval limitation.

The first step towards overcoming these difficulties is to face them frankly. The next step is to concentrate on those fundamental elements of mutual interest and accord which brought us together here and which unite us, despite the real differences that have developed.

Our nations are apparently at one in desiring the continuance of naval limitation and reduction by international treaty--a principle adopted for the first time in history in 1922 and successful for a dozen years beyond any means of measurement. At the time of the Washington Conference we were still in the shadow of the World War. War weary peoples who had experienced the consequences of strife and discord were longing for peace and recovery and praying for an era of stability and good will. The Washington Treaties and the later London Treaty were in harmony with this profound wish. Through them, mankind was freed from the threatening nightmare of a race in naval armaments. Why should we now abandon the invaluable mutual benefits conferred on the participating peoples by the Naval Treaties, when the world is just beginning to emerge from the economic depression which has held it in its grip for the past six years and when it is all the more necessary not further to disturb international relationships and retard or disrupt economic recovery through a naval race? No nation desires to enter such a race--no Government can afford the responsibility for inaugurating it. Our task during the coming weeks is to make it unnecessary.

One means of accomplishing this would be to agree upon a renewal of existing treaties with such modifications as circumstances may require. Failing this we should at any rate make every endeavor, through a frank and friendly exchange of views, to discover other paths to mutual understanding, which would at least prevent a naval race and avoid a disturbance of the equilibrium, and thus pave the way for a later more permanent and comprehensive treaty. Whatever our approach, our objective must be to insure that in the difficult and trying years ahead of us the essential balance between our fleets, which during the past years has proved such a guarantee of peace and stability, should be maintained by means of mutual agreement rather than by expensive and dangerous competition which can profit no one but must harm all.

On behalf of my Government I declare emphatically that the United States will not take the initiative in naval competition. We want no naval increase.



We want limitation and reduction. Our present building program, which is essentially one of replacement, is consistent

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with this desire. For ten years we ceased naval construction. Under our present plans the strengths allotted to us by the London Treaty as of the end of 1936 will not be attained until 1942. We have no wish to exceed those Treaty limits. I may say also that the United States, which is now definitely on the way to recovery from the severe depression through which it has been going, and from which no nation has escaped, is most anxious to devote its energies and material resources to the upbuilding of the country.

However great the difficulties that confront us in this Conference, we are here to help remove them. With good will and patience on the part of all we can find a mutually beneficial solution. I pledge the American Delegation's full cooperation toward this end.

Hull

500.11545/574 : Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

London, December 7, 1935-8 p.m.  
(Received, December 7-3:30 p.m.)

4. Following is text of Japanese opening speech, exchanged for ours this afternoon:

"On this felicitous occasion of the opening of the Five Power Naval Conference, I wish to express our deep appreciation of the efforts since last year of the British Government, through whose good offices the Conference has now met in accordance with the stipulations contained in the two naval treaties of Washington and London.

It has ever been the consistent policy of the Japanese Government to maintain and promote international peace. This has been fully evidenced by the fact of our willing participation in the past disarmament conferences, and our sincere cooperation with other powers in those conferences.

Pursuing the same policy, we desire to achieve, in the present Conference, a just and fair agreement on disarmament which will secure for each country adequate national defence and reduce the burden which weighs upon the people, contributing, at the same time, towards the advancement of peace and good will among the nations of the world.

The object of this Conference, we understand, is to conclude a new comprehensive treaty of naval disarmament with a view to regulating the naval strengths of the powers concerned from the year 1937.

Such a new treaty, in the view of the Japanese Government, should be based upon the fundamental idea of setting up, among the great naval powers of the world, a common limit of naval armaments to be fixed as low as possible, which they shall not be allowed to exceed; simultaneously, offensive forces must be drastically reduced and ample defensive forces provided, so as to bring about a substantial measure of disarmament, thus securing a state of nonmenace and nonaggression among the powers.

The Japanese Government firmly believe that this is indeed the best way of reaching a just and fair agreement on disarmament, whereby

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However great the difficulties that confront us in this Conference, we are here to help remove them. With good will and patience on the part of all we can find a mutually beneficial solution. I pledge the American Delegation's full cooperation toward this end.

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The Japanese Government firmly believe that this is indeed the best way of reaching a just and fair agreement on disarmament, whereby

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the burden of nations may be greatly lightened and a real contribution made towards the durable peace of the world.

The Japanese delegation wish to declare that on such principles as I have outlined, we are prepared to carry on frank exchanges of views with other members of the Conference in a spirit of peaceful collaboration, and to cooperate earnestly throughout with a view to achieving a new comprehensive agreement on disarmament which is at once most fair and rational."

Davis

500.A15A5/598

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE AMERICAN AND THE JAPANESE DELEGATIONS

(London,) December 17, 1935.

Present: Admiral Nagano  
Mr. Nagai  
Admiral Iwashita  
Mr. Terasaki  
Mr. Mizota

Mr. Davis  
Mr. Phillips  
Admiral Standley  
Mr. Dooman  
Captain Ingersoll  
Commander Schuirmann  
Mr. Field

In response to a request from Admiral Nagano in regard to the American proposal referred to by Mr. Davis at the opening session of the Conference, Mr. Davis stated that the American proposal might be summarized as a twenty percent all-around reduction in the various categories, such reduction to be applicable also to Italy and France insofar as the limitations imposed by the Washington Treaty upon those countries are concerned, with the proviso, however, that adjustments between categories shall be agreed upon after discussion.

At Mr. Davis' request, Admiral Standley went into the American proposal at great length. In regard to the question of the replacement of capital ships, Admiral Standley referred to the absence of any construction in this type during the past fifteen years and to the necessity of approaching with extreme caution any suggestion looking toward any change in the size of capital ships. He said that the first few vessels to be built under the replacement program would be of a maximum tonnage of 35,000, and that after the experience thus gained by this new construction the United States would be disposed to examine proposals in regard to reducing the size. Mr. Davis added that we were, however, prepared at this time to enter into a discussion in regard to fixing the maximum caliber of guns.

Admiral Standley referred to the statement made yesterday during the meeting of the heads of the delegations by Mr. Davis, to the effect that prior to the Washington Conference there had existed a common upper limit, with the sky as the limit. Prior to that

Conference, Japan did not have parity but had built a navy conforming to its needs. Failing any agreement, Japan would have the right to build up to parity with the United States if it could, but Admiral Standley did not doubt but that if Japan were to strive to reach parity with the United States, the United States would also build with a view to maintaining its lead. Such a state of affairs, he pointed out, was obviously not desired by either country, and he wondered whether it would not be possible to form an agreement which, while recognizing Japan's sovereign rights to build as large a navy as it desired, would stabilize strengths at the present comparative levels until such time as a more favorable opportunity might be expected for the discussion of a new naval arrangement.

Mr. Davis remarked that we should not overlook the fact that naval limitation is not a question which lies entirely between the United States and Japan. The naval position of the United States is in a considerable measure dependent upon the naval positions of England and of other European powers, as the United States could not ignore the historical fact that it had unwillingly been drawn into two major European Wars.

With respect to the question of security or non-menace and non-aggression, to which Admiral Nagano had made various references, Mr. Davis said that not only had the non-fortification provisions of the Washington Treaty removed the threat of aggression, but the Nine Power Treaty had also been concluded to remove the causes for aggression.<sup>22</sup> This had established the foundation on which naval limitation rests. We consider that the Japanese were thus secured against attack from either the United States or Great Britain, and could not understand what there is that has happened to make Japan feel that she is menaced.

Admiral Standley here quoted excerpts of statements made by Kato and Shidehara at the Washington Conference (pages 106 and 380 (3787) of records of Washington Conference<sup>23</sup>). Admiral Standley continued that at the London Conference we had made further concessions in the ratio to meet Japanese desires for additional security. As regards the present proposal for a twenty percent cut, it might be pointed out that a reduction in air-craft carrier and destroyer tonnage is contingent on reduction in submarines.

Admiral Nagano reiterated that opinion in his country no longer supported the Washington Treaty. He reminded us that our idea of disarmament also had undergone modification; for instance, Mr. Hughes had at the Washington Conference opposed the abolition of

<sup>22</sup> Treaty signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, Foreign Relations 1922, vol. 1, p. 276.

<sup>23</sup> Conference on the Limitation of Armament, Washington, November 12, 1921-February 6, 1922 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1922).



submarines, whereas we had favored abolition at London. Admiral Nagano assured us that the common upper limit did not envisage giving Japan any opportunity for aggression; on the contrary Japan wanted to make aggression by any power impossible. With respect to the London Treaty, Admiral Nagano declared that former Secretary of Navy Adams had said in the Senate that the American Delegation had succeeded in persuading Japan to accept a proposition almost impossible to accept.<sup>24</sup> Both Mr. Davis and Admiral Standley said that if any such statement had been made inferring that Japan was not equally secured it was certainly in error.

Admiral Standley said it had been understood at Washington that every nation was given security in the area in which it had to operate. Japanese waters were made as secure as California waters. However, the United States possessed territories close to Japan with an area as large as Japan's. There are no fortifications there and no submarines. We also had a large territory in Alaska. If we gave Japan parity, she would have absolute superiority in Philippine and Alaskan waters. That would not be giving the United States equality of security. Some people in the United States have said Japan wants to take the Philippines. Japan has never shown any intention to do this any more than we have threatened her. The Government at Washington has done what it could to allay such a misapprehension at home, and we must not allow anything to happen which would bring about a recrudescence of this feeling. The Japanese claims give people who think she wants to take the Philippines or Alaska exactly the ammunition they are looking for.

Admiral Nagano stated that while under the ratio Japan could not possibly menace the United States, the American Navy concentrated in Oriental waters could threaten Japanese security. With respect to the Philippines, it might also be said that the United States had no possessions near Europe, while Europe had possessions near America, and if such geographical aspects were to be taken into account, the situation would become very complex. Japan nevertheless had numerous independent islands off her coast for which she has to find means of defense. She could, therefore, not accept a plan which would permit one power to approach the other, while the reverse was not true. From Japan's point of view the Philippines lay in line of very important waters and hence represented a constant threat. Japan did not want the Philippines but they constituted one reason why she found it difficult to recognize American naval superiority.

Mr. Davis said he did not think the Japanese proposals very fair. At the Washington Conference we had made the greatest sacrifice,

<sup>24</sup> See Department of State Conference Series no. 6, Proceedings of the London Naval Conference of 1930 and Supplementary Documents (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 82



since we had abandoned an actual program of construction which would have given us in two or three years a navy more powerful than Great Britain's and much more powerful in relation to Japan than under the Treaty. It was not the British who accepted parity, but the United States which granted parity. We did this in the interests of promoting peace, understanding and security. Parity with Japan would not give us equal security since it would deprive us of the power to defend Alaska and the Philippines.

Admiral Nagano did not deny that the Washington Treaty checked a naval race and promoted peace, and he hoped that the friendly situation created thereby by the United States and Japan would continue, but Japan did not want to be placed in the position where the continuance of peace and good will was dependent on another country. Japan was worried, not about the safety of distant possessions, but about the safety of Japan herself.

Admiral Standley said that it seemed apparent that we could not see eye to eye on the question of security and non-menace. The only solution, therefore, would be to continue the Washington agreements temporarily until sometime when we would sit down and go over the various problems without suspicion.

Mr. Davis added that we must find a *modus vivendi* which would avoid both the common upper limit and the ratio. There had been an improvement in Japanese-American relations in the past three years. Japan had nothing material which the United States wanted. The two countries were good mutual customers, and there was more reason for our two countries to cooperate than in the case of any other two nations. The present, Mr. Davis added, was no time to change the naval structure. Italy was making war in Abyssinia; Japanese armies were marching in China, and the American people did not know what this would lead to. Japan was in process of evolution and did not herself know what the outcome would be. The American people were watching to see what would take place. They had shown clearly they did not want trouble with Japan or anyone else. In any case, there was more justification for an increase in the American ratio than in that of Japan, for the United States had certainly done nothing to warrant suspicion. On the other hand, what Japan was doing was a little disturbing to the American people and their great qualities and to their urge for progress which the United States admired but which it desired to see exercised in a peaceful manner.

Mr. Phillips said we did not want to do anything to harm the rapidly growing friendship between our peoples. Parity would certainly set us back and breed suspicion. It would arouse fear and there is nothing more detrimental to friendship.

Admiral Nagano said that Japan no less than the United States.

wished to continue to improve friendly relations, but the fact was that Japan felt the pressure of the American Navy which was capable of menacing Japan's very existence. That situation must be altered if Japan is to feel contented in the Pacific.

Admiral Standley, after explaining that he was speaking purely personally and without having discussed it with his Delegation, suggested that the only way to come to a temporary agreement was to take the present structure, with certain modifications as to qualitative limitation, and perhaps to include in a preamble a statement that an adequate navy was the sovereign right of everybody. Such a treaty would include building programs over a period of years in place of the ratio system.

Mr. Nagai at first expressed the fear that any such compromise would again mean the ratio system in disguise. After further explanations by Admiral Standley, he expressed interest in the suggestion on the understanding that it would mean a provisional arrangement for a few years only. The Japanese Delegation indicated that they would think over Admiral Standley's suggestion and give us their views another time.

500.A15A5/589 : Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

(Paraphrase)

London, December 17, 1935-10 p.m.  
(Received December 17-7:45 p.m.)

22. We had a discussion with the British delegation at the Admiralty this morning, following our meeting with the Japanese, at which we discussed future procedure after exchanging information on our conferences with the Japanese.

Although the Japanese had evidently been sent to London under strict and limited instructions, it would be unwise to press for speed or to attempt to come to any conclusions before the Christmas adjournment was the opinion of both delegations. The Japanese might refuse to enter into qualitative discussions after the holidays, if an attempt were made at this time to end quantitative discussions. The best procedure would be to permit a general discussion of the British proposal for limitation of programs, followed by a discussion of the French proposal for a pre avis.<sup>25</sup> It was agreed. It is probable that these discussions would not be completed by December 20, and it would seem that the wisest course would be for the chairman to suggest, at an appropriate time in January, that inasmuch as the discussion of quantitative proposals appeared to have been exhausted for the time

<sup>25</sup> System of advance notification; The London Naval Conference 1935, p. 98.

wished to continue to improve friendly relations, but the fact was that Japan felt the pressure of the American Navy which was capable of menacing Japan's very existence. That situation must be altered if Japan is to feel contented in the Pacific.

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<sup>25</sup> System of advance notification; The London Naval Conference 1935, p. 98.

being, we should now consider other matters such as qualitative limitation without implying that the quantitative question had been disposed of by the Conference.

Since any discussion of programs is bound to lead back again to the ratio question, the British did not appear to have much hope as to the acceptance of their proposal by the Japanese. Notwithstanding, if the Japanese had come to a realization of the material difficulty of trying to achieve equality in fact with Great Britain and the United States and were seeking a way out which would save their faces, a solution might be found along the lines of limitation of programs which without specific ratios would enable the Japanese voluntarily to declare a building program in harmony with the relative strengths formulated.

Some kind of quantitative limitation might serve to make it easier for the Japanese to accept qualitative limitation was also brought out by the discussion. The British suggested, in this connection, that it would be unwise to let the Japanese think that Great Britain and the United States would not take the initiative in building larger and newer types of ships in any case. It might make the Japanese more tractable if we could let the idea get around that we would consider building new types, if there is no qualitative limitation.

The British were informed by Admiral Standley that the Panama Canal would not be an obstacle to building larger capital ships, and Lord Nonsell<sup>25a</sup> stated that he thought it would be desirable to dispel any illusions on this score which might have been shared with the British by the Japanese.

The opinion was expressed by me that at a later date it would be well for the British and ourselves to inform the Japanese definitely that any change in the relative strengths through the action of one country would certainly be most disturbing to the other countries and that the United States and Great Britain would most certainly match any building done by the Japanese in such a way as to maintain the treaty proportions in force at this time.

Devis

500.11545/611 - Telegram  
THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GROW) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
(Paraphrase)

Tokyo, January 12, 1936-7 p.m.  
(Received January 12-10:10 a.m.)

9. The following is for transmission to London for Devis.  
(1) After a six-hour conference between the Foreign Office and Navy officials last night the Cabinet approved this afternoon final answer.

<sup>25a</sup> First Lord of the British Admiralty and presiding officer of the Conference.



tions to Nagano.<sup>26</sup> In order to avoid blame for the complete rupture of the Conference, I understand, the Foreign Office was able to secure Japanese continuance therein, although Navy officials were prepared to break it up by withdrawal. Nagano's instructions are to make clear Japan's proposal to provide real reduction, it is reported, but that she will not discuss qualitative apart from quantitative reduction, nor will Japan enter into temporary agreements which would continue inequalities. The Japanese delegates may remain in effect as observers, however, and in the later phase of the Conference when the subjects are discussed may participate. There has been no definite confirmation of the foregoing report.

(2) While wishing to avoid forcing a formal vote on quantitative limitation which would oblige Japan to withdraw from the Conference and thus accept the onus for a complete break, it is my belief that the Foreign Office will nevertheless welcome a final and definite clarification of the parity issue so that some new program involving political agreements may be set in motion and this chapter closed...

(3) Owing to the discrepancy in views between the Navy and the Foreign Office and the consequent lack of unanimity in the Government regarding methods and tactics, though not in point of general objective, the situation here is shrouded in the usual fog. It is obvious that the Japanese Navy in demanding parity had the American Navy principally in view but neglected to foresee the European complications which their attitude would create. A reconsideration of the parity issue is for them out of the question and, having burned their bridges, we may now expect to see the possibility of finding some alternative of a political nature being explored by the Foreign Office

Grew

500.11545/615 : Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

(Paraphrase)

London, January 14, 1936-1 a.m.

(Received January 13, -10:45 p.m.)

46. Before dinner tonight, at a two-hour meeting with the British, the Japanese told them, in substance, that as regards the common upper limit they were desirous of having a further discussion and a decision. A postponement of the First Committee<sup>27</sup> meeting until Wednesday afternoon was requested by the Japanese, at which time they stated

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Admiral Nagano, chairman of the Japanese delegation.

27 The First Committee consisted of the entire membership of the Conference in committee of the whole; The London Naval Conference 1935, p. 66.

they would give a fuller explanation of their thesis and that Japan would withdraw from the Conference should this be rejected by the other powers.

Both Monsell and Eden<sup>28</sup> told me briefly that "the jig was up," when I saw them later at a meeting. We have arranged to have a further talk with them in the morning, in compliance with their request.

An immediate adjournment of the Conference until later this year was requested by the Japanese who urged the British to agree to this, Eden told me. The British would not agree, Eden definitely told the Japanese; instead, they would propose that the other powers participating in the Conference remain to discuss further a naval agreement to which Japan, if she so desired, might later adhere, Eden said.

I was approached later on by Nagai<sup>29</sup> who said he was desirous of telling me personally how deeply he regretted their inability to reach an agreement and that this would necessitate withdrawal from the Conference by the Japanese. Would it be helpful to them to carry the delegates on for another month or so or was there any hope of their reaching an ultimate agreement, I asked him. Their situation at home was such, Nagai said, that they could not come to any kind of agreement now and their only hope was that there would be a change in public opinion in Japan by bringing matters to a head now which might make it possible later on perhaps this year to have a resumption of negotiations. Nothing must be done to disturb Japanese-American relations, Nagai concluded, and that what Japan wanted above all else was to leave the Conference in a most friendly spirit.

Davis

500.415A5/617 : Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

(Paraphrase)

London, January 14, 1936.7 p.m.

(Received January 14-3, 47 p.m.)

47. This morning a meeting was held at the Foreign Office between the British and the American delegates at which the British informed us of their conversation with the Japanese, the substance of which was transmitted to you in my telegram no. 46, today, 1 a.m. While they could not reach any naval agreement after the rejection of the common upper limit, the Japanese had also said they would like before.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>29</sup> Matsuoka Nagai, Japanese Ambassador to France and member of the delegation.

hand, with a view to perpetuating the terms of Part 4 of the London Naval Treaty,<sup>30</sup> to discuss rules of submarine warfare. After disposing of the common upper limit the British said they would be very glad to do so. Under the circumstances, the Japanese repeated, they would be unable to remain for any negotiations and they again suggested that the Conference take up first Part 4 of the London Naval Treaty. Everything possible had been done to meet the Japanese wishes, the British replied, but they were not willing to depart to that extent from the procedure.

The Japanese had questioned the legality of continuing the Conference once Japan withdraws, the British then told us, since the Washington Treaty envisages only a conference of the five powers and not a four-power meeting and since the Conference was called under this treaty. In disagreeing with this the British told the Japanese that they could see no reason why the other participating powers should not continue to negotiate a naval agreement since without some sort of new agreement there would be chaos and such an agreement could not become effective until after the expiration of the Washington and London Treaties. The British told the Japanese, furthermore, that the other powers would have in mind the possibility and hope that Japan might ultimately become a party to any agreement they might negotiate. The British definitely expressed the view that the obligation of article 23 of the Washington Treaty was fulfilled by the convocation of the present Conference.

They would have no objection to two or three Japanese observers, the British told the Japanese. (This morning, after some discussion, it was agreed that the Japanese should be allowed to have observers but they would have no right to sit with the expert committees for technical discussions. However, they could be kept informed of the results of these discussions.) We then asked the British for their views with reference to later invitations to Russia and Germany. They were keeping both of these nations informed of what is taking place, they replied, but that Italy and France wished to include Greece, Yugoslavia, and Turkey, in which case it would be necessary to invite also Spain, Holland, and Sweden, and perhaps the South American countries. If once you go beyond the major powers, the British said, they were of the opinion that it would be better to include all naval states and that this might be after all of considerable advantage from a practical and psychological viewpoint. Were an agreement to be entered into by all the other naval powers, with the exception of Japan, the would be so overwhelming that they believed Japan would desire to join within a short time. With the Japanese out of the Conference the British

<sup>30</sup> Department of State Treaty Series no. 830, p. 27.  
469186-43-vol. 1-25

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<sup>30</sup> Department of State Treaty Series no. 830, p. 27.  
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recognize that many difficulties would arise; but, on the theory that Japan will ultimately want to come in, they believe we should proceed. As a counterpoise to Japan's freedom, an adequate escape clause should be provided in the meantime.

Except perhaps insofar as it might result from the operation of agreed building programs, the British who desire above all qualitative limitation now state that without Japan the last hope of achieving quantitative limitation has gone. This desire on the part of the British for qualitative limitation without quantitative is no doubt partly determined by their wish to bring into agreement France and Italy and their realization that it is now impossible to have a quantitative agreement between France and Italy and also by the fact that the way would be left open for later adherence by other powers by qualitative limitation.

Davis

507.A1515/618 : Telegram  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE

London, January 15, 1936-2 p.m.  
(Received January 15-11:27 a.m.<sup>31</sup>)

49. At this afternoon's meeting following the Japanese exposition, it is planned that all of the delegations will make final statements in reply.<sup>32</sup>

As the Japanese are planning to release their statement immediately after the meeting, we shall do the same with ours. Text follows and you will be notified of the hour of release probably through flash.<sup>33</sup>

"The United States has been most desirous of reaching a new agreement for a reduction and limitation of naval armaments to supersede the existing treaties that are to expire at the end of this year. We have, therefore, been willing to discuss any proposals and to explore every possibility of agreement. We have been willing to consider any evidence that might have been presented to the effect that the present relative strengths are not fair and equitable and do not provide for equal security.

We have accordingly listened with the most careful attention to all the explanations given by the Japanese delegation of their proposal for a common upper level with a view to determining whether any new facts or considerations might be developed which would justify the United States in modifying its belief that the principles

<sup>31</sup>Telegram in three sections

<sup>32</sup>Tenth meeting of the First Committee, January 15, 1936, The London Naval Conference, 1935, p. 212.

<sup>33</sup>Notification was received by the Department at 1:10 p.m., to release the text of Mr. Davis' statement.

recognize that many difficulties would arise; but, on the theory that Japan will ultimately want to come in, they believe we should proceed. As a counterpoise to Japan's freedom, an adequate escape clause should be provided in the meantime.

Except perhaps insofar as it might result from the operation of agreed building programs, the British who desire above all qualitative limitation now state that without Japan the last hope of achieving quantitative limitation has gone. This desire on the part of the British for qualitative limitation without quantitative is no doubt partly determined by their wish to bring into agreement France and Italy and their realization that it is now impossible to have a quantitative agreement between France and Italy and also by the fact that the way would be left open for later adherence by other powers by qualitative limitation.

Davis

507.41545/618 : Telegram

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION (DAVIS) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

London, January 15, 1936-2 p.m.

(Received January 15-11:27 a.m.<sup>31</sup>)

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of the common upper limit would not be a practicable basis for the limitation and reduction of naval armament. While we greatly appreciate the clear exposition of the Japanese point of view presented by Admiral Nagano, the discussion has if anything served to strengthen our conviction that the principle of a common upper limit would not serve as a basis for negotiation and agreement.

The Japanese have proposed that this Conference establish a level for naval armaments which no contracting power might exceed. They expressed the hope that the agreed limit should be set so low as to require substantial reductions by Japan. This would require contracting powers having navies larger than the limit to scrap or sink many ships to reach this common upper limit and would permit contracting powers having the smaller navies to build up to the common level.

The Japanese recognize that there are differences in vulnerability, responsibility, and needs as between the powers. They state these are of "great consequences to every power." To provide for these differences they propose to make a small quantitative adjustment within the common upper limit. While Japan has objected to a continuance of the so-called ratio system, their proposal for a common upper limit is in fact not an abandonment but an continuance of the ratio system on the basis of parity without taking into account the varying needs of the countries concerned.

The principle of the common upper limit rests in fact on the assumption which it has not been possible to substantiate that equality of security--which we are all unanimously agreed must be the foundation of limitation and reduction--could be achieved by equality of naval armament. We believe it has been sufficiently shown in the course of our discussions that equality of naval armament not only is not the same as equality of security but that the two are incompatible and contradictory. Equal armaments do not insure equal security.

Equality of security as was recognized and established at the Washington Conference can mean only superiority of defense in each country's own waters. This defense depends only in part on actual naval strength. Other factors of equal if not greater importance in determining a nation's capacity for defense are strength of land and air forces and of fortifications, distances from other powers, length of communications, configuration of coast lines, importance and relative distance of outlying possessions, extent and complexity of responsibilities. These necessarily dictate unequal navies if equality of security is to be assured.

The Japanese delegation has stated that one of the objects of their proposal is "to create a state of nonaggression and nonmenace". We are convinced this state now exists among the signatories to the naval treaties.

Certain nations are so situated as to be endowed by nature with a superior power of defense. If, without regard to all the other factors I have cited, a nation so situated should possess naval armaments equal to those of powers not so favored, then that nation would have a very marked naval superiority far more than sufficient for its defensive needs. The sense of security which we feel was created by existing naval treaties would thereby disappear. It is possible to change some factors; it is not possible to change geography.



The existing relative strengths have in effect provided an equilibrium of defense and an equality of security as nearly as is humanly possible. It would be extremely difficult even in more normal times and under conditions of greater mutual confidence, to agree upon such a radical readjustment of these relative strengths as would be involved in acceptance of the common upper limit. In the face of the present world instability such a readjustment, quite aside from the question of principle, is impossible. Bearing in mind the situation in the Far East, in Europe and in Africa, the United States is unwilling to consent to any change which would lessen its relative security particularly in the absence of greater assurance than we now have that to do so would not promote peace and establish a regime of nonmenace and nonaggression. It is, however, in favor of and has proposed at this Conference an all-around proportional reduction in fleet strengths.

With reference to the question of reducing so-called offensive naval arms which has been alluded to, I am persuaded that it is not possible to make out any case whatever as to a distinction to be drawn between offensive and defensive naval vessels. Whether any particular type of naval armament is offensive or defensive depends entirely upon the use that is made of it. If the time ever comes when the conditions of the world are such as to permit of virtual elimination of the necessity of maintaining large navies the first step would naturally be to cease to construct the more expensive types of naval vessels. Certainly the situation in the world today is not such as to justify this.

For all the foregoing reasons the United States is unable to accept the principle of the "common upper limit" as the basis for an agreement. While we would deeply regret the inability to arrive at an agreement acceptable to all the powers here represented our decision and purpose would be to foster the continuance of our friendly relations with all the naval powers."

Davis

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500.11545 Documents/14

PRESS COMMUNIQUE, LONDON NAVAL CONFERENCE, JANUARY 15, 1936<sup>34</sup>

At the request of the Japanese Delegation the Committee, at the invitation of the Chairman, agreed to resume this afternoon the discussion of the Japanese proposal for a common upper limit of naval tonnage. After the Japanese Delegation had made a statement with a view to elucidating further the Japanese proposal, the Chairman asked each Delegation to express their full and definitive views on this proposal. The Chairman, in summing up the discussion, stated that most of the time of the Delegations had been devoted, both inside and outside of the Conference, to a very careful consideration of this Japanese proposal, but he noted that it had received no support. Furthermore, he observed that the Japanese proposal dealt in the main only

<sup>34</sup>

Issued at the close of the tenth meeting of the First Committee.



with quantitative limitation, and quantitative limitation itself was only a limited part of the many problems before the Conference. In the circumstances he thought that the best plan would be to adjourn the meeting and to proceed at the next meeting with the other important work before the Committee.

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500.41545 Documents/10

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JAPANESE DELEGATION (NAGANO) TO THE CHAIRMAN  
OF THE CONFERENCE (MONSELL)

(London) January 15, 1936.

My Lord, I have the honour hereby to notify Your Lordship that as it has become sufficiently clear at to-day's session of the First Committee that the basic principles embodied in our proposal for a comprehensive limitation and reduction of naval armaments cannot secure general support, our Delegation have now come to the conclusion that we can no longer usefully continue our participation in the deliberations of the present Conference.

We remain, nevertheless, firmly convinced that our proposal is one best calculated to attain an effective disarmament, and we regret to state that we cannot subscribe, for the reasons we have repeatedly set forth, to the plans of quantitative limitation submitted by the other Delegations.

I desire to assure you, on this occasion, that we most sincerely appreciate the cordial manner in which you have been good enough to conduct the Conference; at the same time, I should like to tender our deepest thanks on behalf of our Delegation, for the hearty co-operation of all the Delegations to this Conference.

I have (etc.)

Asami Nagano

REFUSAL BY JAPAN TO AGREE TO LIMITATION OF  
GUN CALIBER FOR BATTLESHIPS

500.41545/809

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (STANDLEY) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

414-7(3)/EM-

London (368725)

Washington, 25 July, 1936.

Sir: Informal advices received from your Department have indicated that the Japanese government will not adhere to the Naval Treaty signed in London on March 25, 1936, by the representatives of the United States, the French Republic and the British Commonwealth of Nations.<sup>35</sup>

In this connection it would be of great advantage to the Navy Department to know definitely whether the Japanese government has signified its intention in regard to entering into an agreement to conform to the provision of Part II, Article IV (2) of the Treaty, which would limit to 14 inches in caliber the guns of any capital ship to be constructed or acquired by any high contracting party.

It is requested that the information referred to in the preceding paragraph be furnished to the Navy Department as early as it may conveniently be obtained.

Respectfully,

W. H. Standley

500.41545/841a : Telegram

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN GREAT BRITAIN  
(BINGHAM)

(Paraphrase)

Washington, December 3, 1936-8 p.m.

434. (1) It has become most urgent for the Navy Department to have the latter clarified of Japan's position with regard to article 4, paragraph 2, of the London Naval Treaty of 1936, relating to the caliber of guns on capital ships, in view of the publicity in this country concerning the new capital ships and the short time which remains for the completion of the final plans for these ships. (2) Last August the British Ambassador to Japan informed the British Foreign Office, you will recall, that only a direct approach on this subject might elicit a definite statement regarding the intentions of the Japanese Government and that after the return of

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Mr. Grow<sup>36</sup> from leave of absence November such an approach might appropriately be made. The matter should be taken up more promptly in their view, the Foreign Office replied. In response to this the British Ambassador, we understand, recommended that the subject be broached in London and not in Tokyo.

(3) Then on October 15, the British Foreign Office requested their Embassy at Washington to obtain an expression of our views in the premises. We were agreeable in principle to their putting the question to the Japanese Government, we replied, but it should be put in the name of the British Government alone, and the man on the spot would be in the best position to decide, in view of the internal domestic situation in Japan, since we were desirous of avoiding any action which might have an adverse effect on the development of major policies in that country.

(4) You reported in your despatch no. 2613 of October 27, 1936,<sup>37</sup> that Craigie stated he had discussed this matter with Yoshida,<sup>38</sup> who had indicated that the Japanese might be prepared to give an official assurance in writing, with a face-saving clause, that they would bind themselves to 14-inch guns. Craigie had a second conversation with Yoshida on November 11, and Grow now telegraphs that Clive<sup>39</sup> has been informed that Yoshida said it would be unwise for him to take the subject up himself with Tokyo, and he recommended that the question be taken up as a technical matter directly with his naval attache by the admiralty. However, whether the Admiralty actually did make the approach to the naval attache, no information indicating such action has been received by Clive.

(5) We are desirous of ascertaining precisely where the question lies between the British and the Japanese, whether Craigie actually agreed with Yoshida that the Japanese Naval Attache should be approached by the Admiralty and whether such a course was pursued, before considering taking any action ourselves. You are requested to investigate the matter and to telegraph your report.

Moore

500.41545/871 : Telegram

THE AMBASSADOR IN GREAT BRITAIN (BIRGHAM) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

London, March 30, 1937-1 p.m.

(Received March 30-8:50 a.m.)

178. Foreign Office has informed me that Foreign Secretary (Minister) has handed to British Ambassador in Tokyo formal Japa-

<sup>36</sup> American Ambassador to Japan

<sup>37</sup> Not printed.

<sup>38</sup> Assistant Under Secretary of State, British Foreign Office, and Japanese Ambassador to Great Britain, respectively.

<sup>39</sup> British Ambassador to Japan.



nese reply refusing to accept 14-inch gun limitation since it would mean "qualitative without quantitative limitation".

An editorial entitled "Japan's responsibility" published in today's Times concludes as follows:

"The first step towards a new naval race will be the adoption of 16-inch guns as the largest that may be mounted instead of the 14-inch provided by the treaty; despite her withdrawal from the Conference, it was within the power of Japan to prevent that step by a mere undertaking before April 1 not to take it herself. Her definite refusal to give any such undertaking has just been reported from Tokyo. If the world now finds itself once more committed to the folly of unrestricted naval competition there can be no possible doubt where the responsibility lies."

Bingham

500.11545/883 a : Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW)<sup>40</sup>  
(Paraphrase)

Washington, June 4, 1937-8 p.m.

75. The London Naval Treaty of 1936, as you are aware, made provision for a reduction from 16 inches to 14 inches in the future caliber of guns on battleships conditional upon acceptance of this provision of the treaty by April 1, 1937, by all the powers signatories to the Naval Treaty signed at Washington on February 6, 1922.<sup>41</sup> The American Government has ratified the Naval Treaty of 1936, but because the condition of a general agreement to the 14-inch gun caliber limitation for battleships before April 1, 1937, was not effected, that limitation has not become effective.

This Government is now under the necessity of deciding the caliber of the guns to be mounted on the two new battleships for which appropriations have been made and the construction of which has begun. The Government has also to determine what shall be the caliber on additional battleships for the construction of which appropriation of the necessary funds may soon be asked of Congress by the President.

The Government of the United States, which is sincerely committed to the principle of reduction of armament has been and remains entirely willing to accept a gun caliber limitation of 14 inches, provided that the other principal naval powers will agree to adopt and to adhere to a like limitation.

The President must soon make a decision, and while he would deplore the necessity of having to increase the caliber of the guns to be mounted on our new capital ships to 16 inches, he may find that he

<sup>40</sup> Sent, mutatis mutandis, on the same date to the Ambassadors in Great Britain, France, and Italy

<sup>41</sup> Foreign Relations, 1922, vol. 1, p. 247

shall have to take this action if the other principal naval powers are unwilling to maintain a limitation of 14 inches.

The adoption of the 14-inch gun caliber as a maximum, subject to the adoption of that limitation by the other principal naval powers, was one of the important points of agreement reached by the powers who negotiated the Naval Treaty of 1936; this fact gives rise to a sincere hope in the part of the American Government that there may at least be the possibility of achieving this one aspect of limitation, thereby removing an element of suspicion and uncertainty detrimental to the best interest of all the powers who are concerned.

For the foregoing reasons you are requested to approach the Japanese Government with a view to ascertaining whether that Government would be willing to maintain this one aspect of naval limitation.

You may also state that the Government of the United States is presenting this inquiry and proposal simultaneously to all the powers signatories to the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922; you should add that the Government of the United States would appreciate receiving a reply before June 21, 1937.

Hull

500.41545/891:Telegram

THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Tokyo, June 18, 1937-4 p.m.

(Received June 18-9:05 a.m.)

161. Department's 75, June 4, 8 p.m.; Embassy's 152, June 7, 3 p.m.<sup>42</sup> Following is the official English translation of the Japanese text of the aide-memoire marked "confidential", dated today, handed to me this afternoon by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"Aide-memoire. The Japanese Government have taken note of the proposal of the Government of the United States regarding the limitation of the calibre of guns for capital ships which was contained in the aide-memoire handed on June 7 this year to the Foreign Minister by the United States Ambassador in Tokyo.

The fundamental policy that guides Japan in providing for her armament is, as has been made clear on many previous occasions, based on a consistent regard for the principle of nonmenace and nonaggression. It follows, therefore, that so long as the other powers also adhere to the same principle and are content with maintaining the minimum force required for their strictly defensive needs, Japan entertains no intention at all of embarking, on her own initiative, upon the building up of a naval force which could be a menace to other countries.

While the limitation of the gun calibre for capital ships constitutes one important aspect of qualitative limitation, the Japanese Government, in elucidating at the last London Naval Conference their basic attitude concerning the means calculated to bring about just and fair

<sup>42</sup>

Latter not printed

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While the limitation of the gun calibre for capital ships constitutes one important aspect of qualitative limitation, the Japanese Government, in elucidating at the last London Naval Conference their basic attitude concerning the means calculated to bring about just and fair



state of naval disarmament, made it clear that they could not subscribe to qualitative limitation alone, if not accompanied by a simultaneous restriction in quantity. The Japanese Government still hold the same conviction as regards the matter of qualitative limitation. Stated briefly, it is their belief that a mere limitation in quality alone will only induce a tendency to make up for the deficiency caused through such limitation, by resorting to quantitative augmentation, thus ultimately leading to a competition in naval armament in quantity. The Japanese Government, therefore, are not, at this juncture, in a position to adopt, apart from quantitative restrictions, a mere limitation of the gun calibre for capital ships, a matter which properly belongs to the most important phase of qualitative limitation and hope that the United States Government will understand the above-mentioned position of the Japanese Government.

It may be added for the information of the United States Government that this position of the Japanese Government as regards qualitative limitation was communicated towards the end of March to the British Government, when the Japanese Government responded to the British proposal of January this year regarding the limitation to fourteen inches of the maximum calibre of guns for capital ships. June 18, 1937."

Grew

500.41545/903

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ON JULY 10, 1937

On April 1, 1937, in view of the fact that all the Parties to the Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament of February 6, 1922, had not accepted 14 in. as the limit of the caliber of guns on capital ships, under the London Naval Treaty, 1936, 16 in. automatically became the limit of the caliber of guns to be mounted on capital ships.

However, this Government, not wishing to leave a stone unturned in its effort to maintain the limit of the caliber of guns on capital ships at the lower level, about June 1, on its own initiative sounded out the Governments Parties to the Washington Naval Treaty to ascertain whether they would be willing to maintain the limit of the caliber of guns on capital ships at 14 in. At the same time, this Government in line with its policy consistently followed of favoring the principle of a reduction of armaments, expressed its entire willingness faithfully to maintain the lower level.

The Governments thus approached have now replied. Unfortunately, it is established that there is not a universal acceptance by the Washington Naval Powers of the limit of gun caliber at 14 in.

With the greatest reluctance, therefore, this Government has been obliged to conclude that all other Governments have given no assurance of the maintenance of the 14 in. gun level. As a consequence, therefore, guns of a caliber of 16 in. will be mounted on the two new battleships for which appropriation has been made and on which construction has begun.



REJECTION BY JAPAN OF AMERICAN, BRITISH, AND FRENCH PROPOSALS FOR  
THE RECIPROCAL EXCHANGE OF NAVAL CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION

500.41545 Construction/91a : Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREN)

Washington, February 3, 1938-8 p.m.

36. As you know persistent reports have reached us that the Japanese are building, or contemplate building, ships exceeding the limits of the London Naval Treaty, 1936.<sup>43</sup> We have discussed the matter with the British, who called in the French, and it has been agreed that an identic note, mutatis mutandis, should be delivered to the Japanese Government by you and your British and French colleagues on Saturday at times to be agreed upon by you.

The following is the text of the note which you should address to the Japanese Government:

(Here follows the text of the body of the American note dated February 5, printed infra.)

Hull

500.41543 Construction/131

THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREN) TO THE JAPANESE MINISTER  
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (HIROTA)

no. 875

Tokyo, February 5, 1938.

Excellency: The Japanese Government will be aware that under the London Naval Treaty 1936 the American Government is precluded from constructing capital ships (i. e., vessels of more than 10,000 tons standard displacement or with a gun of more than 8 inches) which exceed 35,000 tons or carry a gun of more than 16 inches, or which are of less than 17,500 tons or carry a gun of less than 10 inches. As regards cruisers (i. e., vessels of not more than 10,000 tons with a gun of not more than 8 inches) the American Government is limited to a maximum of 8,000 tons with six inch guns.

The Japanese Government has unfortunately not seen its way to subscribe to the London Naval Treaty, nor has it hitherto felt able to give any assurances that Treaty limits would in practice be adhered to by it.

As the Japanese Government will be aware, the Naval Treaty gives

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As the Japanese Government will be aware, the Naval Treaty gives

the American Government a right of escalation in the event of building not in conformity with treaty limits by a Power not a party thereto. There have for some time been persistent and cumulative reports, which, in the absence of explicit assurances from the Japanese Government that they are ill-founded, must be deemed to be authentic, that Japan has undertaken or intends to undertake construction of capital ships and cruisers not in conformity with the above-mentioned limits. The American Government has therefore decided that it will be necessary for it to exercise its right of escalation unless the Japanese Government can furnish the aforesaid assurances and can satisfy the American Government that it will not, prior to January 1, 1943, lay down, complete, or acquire any vessel which does not conform to the limits in question, without previously informing the American Government of its intention to do so and of tonnage and calibre of the largest gun of the vessel or vessels concerned.

In view of the forthcoming publication of naval estimates and necessity for giving other Treaty Powers information as to intended American construction, the American Government will be glad to receive a reply not later than February 20 next. Should no reply be received by that date, or should the reply be lacking in the desired information and assurances, it will be compelled to assume that the Japanese Government either is constructing or acquiring or has authorized the construction or acquisition of vessels not in conformity with the limits referred to. The American Government would thereupon be obliged in consultation with the other Naval Powers with which it is in treaty relations to resume full liberty of action. If, however, the Japanese Government, though engaged in, or intending to engage in, construction not in conformity with treaty limits, were willing to indicate forthwith the tonnages and callibres of guns of the vessels which it was constructing, or was intending to construct, the American Government for its part would be ready to discuss with the Japanese Government the question of the tonnages and gun calibres to be adhered to in future if Japan were now prepared to agree to some limitation. It would, however, be necessary that such consultation should be completed by May 1.<sup>44</sup>

I avail myself (etc)

Joseph C. Grew

500.11545/131

THE JAPANESE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (HIROTA) TO THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW)

no. 18, American I

Tokyo, February 12, 1938

Your Excellency: I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's letter no. 875 dated 5th February, 1938, in which

<sup>44</sup>

The date was advanced to April 1 by the Department's telegraphic instruction no. 49, Feb 9, 1938; not printed

you set forth your Government's desire regarding the communication of information on the matter of naval construction.

It may be recalled that at the last London Naval Conference the Japanese Government proposed, in the earnest desire to bring about a drastic reduction of naval armament, the total abolition of capital ships and aircraft-carriers, which are aggressive in their nature, and at the same time contended that qualitative limitation, if not accompanied by quantitative limitation, would not be calculated to achieve any fair and equitable measure of disarmament. Unfortunately the views of the Japanese Government were not shared by your Government and the other Governments concerned. This fundamental principle entertained by the Japanese Government was, as your Government will be aware, made clear again last year in their reply to the proposal of your Government regarding the limitation of gun calibres. The Japanese Government, always prompted by the spirit of non-menace and non-aggression, have no intention whatever of possessing an armament which would menace other countries. At this juncture, when, as a result of the non-acceptance by other countries of the reasonable desires of Japan in the matter of disarmament, there is as yet in existence no fair disarmament treaty to which Japan is a party, the Japanese Government are of opinion that the mere communication of information concerning the construction of vessels will, in the absence of quantitative limitation, not contribute to any fair and equitable measure of disarmament and regret that they are unable to comply with the desire of your Government on this point.

The Japanese Government fail to see any logical reasoning in an assumption on the part of your Government that this Government must be deemed to entertain a scheme of constructing vessels which are not in conformity with the limits provided in the London Naval Treaty of 1936, from the mere fact that they do not despatch a reply giving the desired information; and they are of opinion that it is not a matter which should concern this Government if your Government, on the basis of whatever reason or rumour, should exercise the right of escalation provided in any treaty to which Japan is not a party.

Your Government are good enough to intimate that, should the Japanese Government hereafter be prepared to agree to some limitation in respect of the tonnage of vessels and the calibre of guns, they would also be prepared to discuss the matter. The Japanese Government still holding the firm conviction that qualitative limitation, if not accompanied by quantitative limitation, would by no means contribute to the attainment of any fair and equitable measure of disarmament, cannot but consider that the discussion suggested by your Government would not conduce in any measure to the realisation of their desires concerning disarmament. It is to be added, however, that as the Japanese Government do not fall behind other Govern-



ments in their ardent desire for disarmament, they will be ready at any moment to enter into any discussions on the matter of disarmament which give primary importance to a fair quantitative limitation.

I avail myself (etc)

Koki Hirota

500.A15A5 Construction/141

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR (LINDSAY)<sup>45</sup>

Washington, March 31, 1938.

Excellency: With reference to Article 25 of the Naval Treaty signed in London on March 25, 1936, I have the honor to notify Your Excellency, in accordance with paragraph (2) of that Article, that the Government of the United States of America finds it necessary to exercise the right of escalation reserved in paragraph (1) and of effecting a departure from the limitations and restrictions of the Treaty.

The proposed departure relates to the upper limits of capital ships of sub-category (a) and to the calibre of guns which may be mounted on capital ships of sub-category (a).

The above action is motivated by the fact that upon the receipt of reports to the effect that Japan is constructing or has authorized the construction of capital ships of a tonnage and armament not in conformity with the limitations and restrictions of the Treaty, the Government of the United States addressed an inquiry to the Japanese Government and the Japanese Government did not choose to furnish information with regard to its present naval construction or its plans for future construction.

Since there is no separate diplomatic representation of Australia, New Zealand, or India at Washington, there are enclosed copies of this note which you are respectfully requested to transmit to these governments.

Accept (etc.)

Cordell Hull

<sup>45</sup>

Identical notes, except for the final paragraph, were sent on the same date to the French Ambassador and the Canadian Minister; the same text was telegraphed to the American Ambassadors in Italy and Japan to be communicated as a matter of courtesy to the Governments to which they were accredited.

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REFUSAL BY JAPAN TO GRANT THE PRIVILEGE OF NAVAL VISITS OF COURTESY  
TO UNITED STATES SHIPS ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS INTO CERTAIN TERRITORIAL  
WATERS

811.33621/9a : Telegram

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREEN)  
(Paraphrase)

Washington, June 13, 1936-2 p.m.

75. For several years now the Government of Japan has requested, each year, that the American Government extend facilities in its territorial waters off the Alaskan coasts to two Japanese Government ships and permit their entry into harbors in Alaska and in the Aleutian Islands that are not open, ordinarily, to foreign commerce. In the case of one of the vessels in question it was stated that its purpose in visiting these waters and harbors was the making of studies in connection with protection of fur-bearing seals; in the case of the second vessel, however, it was not suggested that the visits would be made on basis of any treaty or formal arrangement between the American Government and the Government of Japan. The Government of the United States has acceded, nevertheless, to the requests of the Government of Japan in this regard.

A strong undercurrent of suspicion and conjecture has existed for some time past over harbor developments or fortifications in possessions which both Japan and the United States have in the Pacific. No objection to the visits of Japanese Government vessels to the territorial waters and closed harbors of Alaska has been made by this Government, as it was believed that the opportunities which were open in this way for observation by Japanese vessels would serve to remove any suspicion which the Government of Japan might hold that any improvements have been made of such a nature as would violate either the letter or the spirit of the naval treaty signed on February 6, 1922.<sup>46</sup>

In our view it is unfortunate that the Government of Japan so far has not adopted an attitude similarly liberal in the face of allegations that in the Japanese mandated islands of the Pacific improve-

46

Foreign Relations 1922, vol. i, p. 247.

ments are being carried out which are irreconcilable with Japan's treaty obligations not to fortify those islands. We can understand that the Government of Japan should be reluctant to give any countenance to irresponsible allegations, but nevertheless that Government undoubtedly shares with the Government of the United States the view that persistent suspicion, with regard to this matter is provocative of mutual distrust, and that such suspicion, therefore, should be dispelled.

The American destroyer Alden will be sent shortly to the Asiatic station according to the Navy Department plans. The Japanese Government will thus have presented to it an opportunity to extend to a vessel of this Government courtesies at the larger unopened ports of the Pacific mandated islands, as well as at the open ports. An invitation by the Government of Japan for the Alden to visit these ports would have, in our opinion, highly beneficial results from the point of view of relations between the two nations.

Please consider carefully and attentively our views as we have sketched them. If no objection is perceived, please present these views informally and orally to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, putting forward the suggestion outlined in the foregoing paragraph as on your own initiative.

Inform the Department currently by telegraph

Hull

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811.33621/14 : Telegram

THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GROW) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
(Paraphrase)

Tokyo, July 8, 1936-10 a.m.

(Received July 8-1:11 a.m.)

150. Today I made suggestion, as on my own initiative, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs with regard to an invitation to the Alden to visit open and unopened ports in the Pacific islands under Japanese mandate.

Marked interest was shown by the Minister in the situation as I described it, but he professed not to know anything at all about the subject. He told me that he would see what there was that could be done and that he would try to give me, before July 20, the results of his inquiries.

Grow



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Hull

811.3362i/14 : Telegram

THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GREW) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
(Paraphrase)

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(Received July 8-1:11 a.m.)

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Grew

811.3362i/16 : Telegram  
THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GROW) TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
(Paraphrase)

Tokyo, July 28, 1936-1 p.m.  
(Received July 28-7:27 a.m.)

163. At the request of the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Counselor of the Embassy called on the Vice Minister to discuss certain questions that had been broached by the Ambassador to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. One of these questions related to the possibility of the visit by the Alden to ports in the Japanese mandated islands. This call was the only opportunity that presented itself for discussion of the matter since the visit of the Ambassador on July 8.

The Vice Minister stated that the suggestion of the Ambassador had been referred to the Ministry of Overseas Affairs but that no reply had been received. He further stated that there would probably be consultation with other government departments. In response to a query by the Counselor, he expressed the fear that the Foreign Office had no way of expediting the reply.

The manner of the Vice Minister was friendly, but it indicated that the Foreign Office could do nothing further.

GROW

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811.3362i/16 : Telegram  
THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR IN JAPAN (GROW)  
(Paraphrase)

Washington, August 7, 1936-7 p.m.

102. Embassy's telegram no. 163, July 28, 1 p.m. With regard to the suggestion made relative to the Alden, the Department assumes that there is no prospect that the Japanese authorities will take favorable action. In reply to a communication from the Japanese Embassy here,<sup>47</sup> the Department is today returning an adverse answer<sup>47</sup> to that Embassy's request that the Japanese Government training ship Shintoku Maru be permitted to enter a Hawaiian harbor which is not listed as a port of entry.

Phillips

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<sup>47</sup>Not printed  
469186-43-vol, 1-26

811.33621/16 : Telegram  
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